



The African Communist

JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY



**S.A.
COMMUNISTS
FACE
THE WORLD**

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS

Distributors of *The African Communist*

Subscription Price for 1991

SOUTH AFRICA All enquiries for *The African Communist* and
Umsebenzi to:
South African Communist Party, P.O. Box 2424,
Johannesburg 2000, South Africa

**AFRICA, EUROPE
AND ASIA** £12 per year including postage surface mail
£18 per year airmail

NORTH AMERICA \$24 per year including postage surface mail
\$36 per year airmail

Address until December 1, 1990:

**Inkululeko Publications,
P.O. Box 902, London N19 3YY
Telephone: 071-263 8417
Fax: 071-263 9947**

After December 1, 1990:

**Inkululeko Publications,
P.O. Box 2424, Johannesburg 2000,
South Africa.
Telephone: Johannesburg 836 6867**

ISSN 0001-9976

PROPRIETOR: Dan Tloome

**The African Communist is available on microfilm and microfiche from
University Microfilm International, 300 North Zeeb Road,
Department P.R., Ann Arbor, MI. 48106, U.S.A.**

**Typeset on Scantext 2000 by Point Five Studios Ltd. (TU)
55-56 St. Martins Lane, London WC2**

**Printed by Blackrose Press (TU),
London EC1 Tel: 071-251 3043**

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interest of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party.

No 123 Fourth Quarter 1990

CONTENTS

- 5 **EDITORIAL NOTES**
SACP launch opens a new era; Negotiations Under Threat; The threat from the right wing; Members of the Interim Leadership Group.
- 20 PHINEAS MALINGA
NATIONALISATION OR FREE ENTERPRISE?
An examination of the economic policy options which will accompany the national democratic revolution.
- 34 MZALA
THE BANTUSTAN SYSTEM IS AT THE CENTRE OF NATAL VIOLENCE
It is the KwaZulu bantustan that provides the social facilities and the protective machinery for the vigilantes.
- 39 HARRY GWALA
PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM — 1: A REPLY TO JOE SLOVO
In a contribution to the continuing debate, the author argues that we must look at history from all sides and not be one-sided in our approach.
- 48 EXPLO NANI KOFI
PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM — 2: DON'T FORGET THE MACHINATIONS OF IMPERIALISM
A contribution from a leading member of the United Revolutionary Front of Ghana.
- 52 NYAWUZA
LEFT, RIGHT ON THE ROAD TO THE BLACK REPUBLIC
Final instalment on the implementation of the Comintern's Black Republic resolution adopted at the 6th Congress in 1928.

- 62 JABULANI MKHATSHWA
AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT
Angola: The first steps towards democracy; Kenya: Demand for a new beginning and a new direction.
- 68 THERESA ZANIA
THE ICU REACHES ITS PEAK – AND BEGINS TO BREAK UP
The third and last article written for *The African Communist* to mark the 70th anniversary of the ICU.
- 83 **BOOK REVIEWS**
South Africa Between Reform and Revolution, by Alex Callinicos; *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen; *Cape Town Coolie*, by Reshard Gool; *Higher Than Hope*, *The Authorised Biography of Nelson Mandela*, by Fatima Meer.
- 91 **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
On Trotskyism, from Charlie van Gelderen, Cambridge; and on the merits of *The African Communist*, from a number of readers.



S.A.C.P LAUNCH OPENS **A NEW ERA**

THE PUBLIC LAUNCH of the South African Communist Party after 40 years of illegality at the Soweto mass rally on July 29 was an event of fundamental and symbolic importance.

From the date of its foundation on July 30, 1921, the Communist Party has promoted the ideals of working-class internationalism, socialism and peace, and for close on 50 years was the only non-racial political organisation in the country. It has stood for full and complete equality between all sections of the South African population and has made no distinction in its membership on the grounds of race or colour.

Perceived as a major threat to the ruling class, it was persecuted by successive South African regimes, not only because of its ideology but because of its involvement in the day-to-day struggles of the people and its growing success in the task of mobilising and organising the working class for effective political action.

Communist Party members have been in the thick of every people's struggle since the day of the Party's formation — in the ceaseless campaigns against the pass laws, the fight for higher wages and better working conditions, the fight against fascism and war, the campaign for the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter, the bus boycotts, the resistance to apartheid oppression. The mass movement against white domination headed by the African National Congress which has assumed such vast proportions today extends far beyond the ranks of the Communists, but the Communist Party is an essential part of it. Communists were present at the birth of Umkhonto we Sizwe and have fought and died in its ranks side by side with their non-Communist brothers and sisters.

For all these reasons, the Nationalist Party, both before and after coming to power, regarded the Communist Party as the main focus of challenge to its apartheid policies and sought to eliminate it. In a speech on November 18, 1948, the Transvaal leader of the Nationalist Party, J.G. Strijdom, later to succeed Malan as Prime Minister, declared that "before the Nationalist Party could reach its ultimate goal — a republic — it would have to solve the colour problem. Anybody who purposely tried to upset the government's plans to put into operation its apartheid policy would be guilty of treason. The main principle of apartheid is the continuation of European supremacy (baasskap)".

On the eve of the 1949 provincial elections the Minister of Justice C.R. Swart, later to become President, told the House of Assembly that a departmental committee which had investigated the Communist Party had come to the conclusion that it constituted a "national danger" and that it was imperative to combat the "dangerous undermining" by the Communists of "our national life, our democratic institutions, and our Western philosophy".

THE ALLIANCE

A year later the Suppression of Communism Act was passed, in protest against which the African National Congress, Indian Congress, African People's Organisation and Communist Party entered into an alliance for the purpose of staging a one-day strike on June 26 — the origin of our Freedom Day which has been commemorated annually ever since.

The ensuing 40 years have seen the alliance between the ANC and SACP grow steadily stronger and gain more and more support from the masses of the South African people. The Nationalists have won their republic, true, but they have lost their apartheid policy, which President De Klerk today admits is indefensible. The road to universal suffrage, however ill-defined that concept may still be in the minds of some of the protagonists, is now opening up as the Nationalists and the ANC enter into negotiations for a new constitution.

The Communist Party has declared its full support for the negotiating process and as loyal members of the ANC, Communist Party members are involved in it whether the regime likes it or not. The attempt to destroy the Communist Party has failed totally, for today, despite all the persecution and repression, the jailing, torture and killing, the Communist Party enjoys greater mass support than ever before. And for a reason which it is time that its enemies took into account.

On July 30 next year the Party will celebrate its 70th anniversary. In the Manifesto adopted at its founding conference in Cape Town in 1921, the Party declared:

"We hold aloft the glistening banner of the World Commune to be, when the class war shall have been for ever stamped out, when mankind shall no longer cower under the bludgeon of the oppressor, when the necessities and amenities of life, the comfort and the culture, the honour and the power, shall be to him who toils not to him who exploits, when none shall be called master and none servant, but all shall be fellow workers in common".

We have held aloft this glistening banner for nearly 70 years and we believe no one has contributed more to the process of social reconstruction which has generated so much hope in the recent period than the South African Communist Party. The enthusiasm which greeted our launch at the Soweto soccer stadium on July 29 shows that millions of South Africans identify with our aspirations and place their confidence in us to help bring them to realisation.

The circumstances surrounding the Party launch — the detention of Mac Maharaj, Billy Nair and others, the unsuccessful attempt to exclude Joe Slovo from the negotiating process —

reveal that anti-Communism remains a major plank in the regime's platform. The Nationalist Party's Director of Information, Rennie Schoeman, addressing a conference of the World Anti-Communist League in Brussels on the Wednesday preceding the launch, declared that it was one of the primary objectives of the De Klerk regime to bring about a parting of the ways between the ANC and SACP.

The SACP rally gave an emphatic reply to De Klerk. Delivering a fraternal message from the ANC, Nelson Mandela said that "as a defender of democracy, the ANC has fought and will continue to fight for the right of the SACP to exist". The SACP had proved a reliable ally, he said. "Its members have defended and propagated the policies of our movement — including the Freedom Charter — without hesitation".

In his keynote address, SACP general secretary Joe Slovo branded the Pretoria regime's accusations of a communist plot as "lies, lies, lies". There was no plot to seize power, he said. The SACP supported the ANC's attempt to achieve a peacefully negotiated solution in the interests of all, black and white.

Nevertheless, the regime can be expected to renew its splitting tactics, which are in line with its traditional policy of divide and rule. The liberation movement must be prepared to defend the alliance which has been built up with such struggle and sacrifice over the years and which has brought the movement to the level it has reached today nationally and internationally. Greater and wider unity between all anti-apartheid forces, not disunity and fragmentation, is the key to the achievement of our objective — a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THREAT

THE GROOTE SCHUUR AND PRETORIA MINUTES record appreciable progress on the road to a new South Africa, but the liberation movement cannot afford to be lulled into a false sense of optimism. For all the agreement that has been reached so far, it is clear that the regime and the ANC still have vastly different agendas. For one thing, while the ANC has declared itself by means of the Freedom Charter, the

Constitutional Guidelines and innumerable statements of policy, the regime has still not put forward a single concrete proposal in terms of which one can gauge its real intentions. However, both parties are agreed that in the present climate conciliation is preferable to confrontation and conflict, and it is to be hoped that in due course some sort of consensus will emerge.

Obstacles to negotiation still remain, and more will crop up from time to time, because the task of ending the brutal oppression and exploitation which has characterised our society for so long is exceedingly complex. And let us not forget that the two parties have not yet got down to discussing the nature of the new South Africa which will emerge from these negotiations. All that has happened so far is that agreement has been reached on the removal of obstacles to negotiations. The negotiations themselves have not yet begun.

The schedules for the release of prisoners and the return of exiles set out in the Pretoria Minute are necessarily tentative, and time alone will tell whether what happens in practice measures up to the demands and expectations of the ANC. The Minute says that "the latest date envisaged for the completion of the total task in terms of the Report of the Working Group (set up at the Groote Schuur talks in May) is not later than 30 April 1991". By then all the political prisoners and exiles should be safely back home. Bearing in mind that the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of people are involved, one can only stress that not only eternal vigilance but also the fullest possible consultation at all levels and at all times are essential if these tasks are to be successfully accomplished.

The whole process of negotiation and reconciliation can be badly derailed by the sort of violence which has swept across South Africa in the recent period. The appalling atrocities which have scarred our land must be ended if the prospect of peace is to survive. How can whites abandon prejudice, how can blacks acquire trust, when violence and bloodshed are the order of the day?

The problems confronting South Africa are too serious to permit a continuation of this sort of conflict. If we are to provide every citizen of a democratic South Africa with a home and a job, with good health and education, with elementary services like piped water, electric light and water-borne sewerage, we cannot

afford the colossal waste of human life and energy that we see all about us at present. We need all the effort and ingenuity of every citizen in conditions of peace and security to lift our country out of the misery and squalor most people have endured up till now and to provide at least the perspective of a better life for all.

The so-called "mini-emergency" which the Pretoria regime has imposed in the townships, the recruiting of more police, the drafting in of the military, will not solve the problem because the regime seems reluctant to confront the guilty parties. The ANC is fully justified in demanding that action be taken to bring the Inkatha warlords and their protectors and abettors in the security services to book, for it is they, not the ANC, who have initiated the violence to promote their political objectives. The lie of "black on black violence" must be nailed once and for all.

The Pretoria Minute recorded the fact that in the interests of moving as speedily as possible towards a negotiated peaceful political settlement, the ANC had agreed to suspend all armed actions with immediate effect and that in future "no further armed actions and related activities by the ANC and its military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe will take place". In the light of what has happened since that Minute was signed, we feel that the ANC is fully justified in demanding that its murderous enemies, black and white, be disarmed. Why should the ANC be deprived of the means of defending itself when its opponents are allowed to go on the rampage unchecked?

In the light of the regime's continued recourse to detention without trial, the ANC is also fully justified in demanding that the relevant provisions of the Internal Security Act be scrapped forthwith and the basic principle of the rule of law — that arrested persons should be either speedily brought to trial or released — be re-established without delay. According to the Pretoria Minute, the Government promised only "an ongoing review of security legislation". The Government must understand that its sincerity will be tested by the extent to which it abandons in practice its association with the abominable apparatus of indefinite detention, death squads and all the rest of the repressive machinery which has made the apartheid system stink in the nostrils of civilised mankind.

THE THREAT FROM THE RIGHT WING

THE THREAT OF THE ULTRA-RIGHT in South Africa should not be ignored or dismissed as empty. It is potentially a formidable force, capable of inflicting death and destruction on a vast scale, causing endless damage to race relations and setting back progress towards the achievement of a non-racial and democratic society.

The worst element of the ultra-right comprises those fanatics whose pathological hatred of blacks leads them on to the streets in savage forays which leave a trail of bodies in their wake. But it would be a mistake to regard the Barend Strydoms of this world as merely the unfortunate possessors of diseased or disordered minds who could perhaps be cured by the administration of drugs or some other form of therapy. They are racists who have taken the creed of white supremacy to its inevitable conclusion. They believe blacks are inferior and must be kept in their place, and they are prepared to kill to ensure that the white man stays boss.

The support which Strydom has elicited from the white community indicates he does not stand alone in his infamous crusade, and indeed he has now been joined by thugs in Welkom and other centres where blacks have been killed or injured in a sequence of unprovoked attacks. It is even rumoured that the authorities are contemplating categorising Strydom as a political prisoner so that he may benefit from any amnesty that may be granted by the regime in the course of the present negotiations with the ANC.

Were this to be done, it would reflect the responsibility the regime feels for the atrocities perpetrated by these breakaways from its camp. There is a direct link between racist murder and the Population Registration Act which De Klerk still insists on retaining on the statute book. Only when the legal dividing line between South Africa's citizens has been eliminated in every sphere of life will it be possible to end the tradition of racial violence which has marred the history of our land for so long.

De Klerk is asking the world to accept his commitment to "reform" and call off the economic, sports and cultural boycotts of South Africa. In the eyes of the liberation movement, however, De Klerk has not gone nearly far enough to meet its demands. He still openly declares he is not prepared to accept majority rule on the basis of one person one vote in a unitary state with an undivided parliament and voters' roll. And in the context of the present debate about violence he has done nothing to curb the appetite of his own supporters or of the right-wing extremists who are ready to shoot down blacks at the drop of a hat.

De Klerk must take firm action to purge his own administration, police and military of all who show any sympathy with the right wing. The allegation has long been voiced that death squads in South Africa, in Natal as elsewhere, operate with the assistance and connivance, if not under the direction, of the police and military. It is unbelievable and intolerable that a long string of assassinations of progressive activists can have taken place without a single offender being brought to book. The evidence of government involvement in the murder of its opponents which has been placed before the Harms and Hiemstra commissions cannot be ignored.

From the Conservative Party, with 39 members of the white parliament, to the Wit Wolwe there is a whole gradation of right-wing organisations who between them cannot devise a practicable programme for the solution of the country's problems. Some of them aim simply to maintain the status quo, others call for the establishment of an all-white state which can have no borders or logic beyond the boundaries of their imagination.

THE THREAT OF FASCISM

In essence, all the right-wing parties rely on the exercise of force to preserve the present relationship between black and white in South Africa. They accuse the De Klerk regime of being too soft, of compromising, of selling the white man down the river, of appeasement. If they came to power they would seek to consolidate apartheid with all possible speed, re-impose those few measures repealed by De Klerk, re-ban the ANC and SACP, curb the trade union movement, strengthen the hand of the police and military to put down all dissent. They would hope to establish

a regime of blood and iron on the lines of policy advocated by Hitler and Mussolini.

A right-wing seizure of power, whether by coup or election, can never bring peace to South Africa. On the contrary, it would further polarise the nation, set group against group, and guarantee that the future of the country was drowned in blood. International opinion would be outraged, investment would again dry up, and the economy of the country would be irreparably damaged. With the inevitable decline in living standards, civil conflict would escalate; the spiral of violence and death would become endless.

It is precisely because De Klerk and his colleagues realised that the road of apartheid led to this ruin that they embarked on their programme of "reform". One hopes that in due course they will realise that half measures are not good enough, and that the only way out of the mess in which the country finds itself is via the Freedom Charter. But in the meantime it should be obvious to them that the gravest threat to their programme comes, not from the ANC, but from their own right wing, whose activities are undermining their efforts and threatening to destabilise the whole country. And it should be noted in this context that right-wing forces have approached Inkatha with a view to forming a united front against any possibility of peaceful progress emanating from the present discussions between De Klerk and the ANC.

It is in the best interests of all parties seeking a peaceful solution to the problems of South Africa that these right-wing forces should be effectively countered. They fight for the vested interests and privilege of the minority and threaten the welfare and livelihood of the majority of the population. Their resort to illegal force, to assassinations and death squads, to kidnappings and torture must be put down without hesitation. Appeasement can only encourage the right wing to further excesses and adventures.

POSITIVE ACTION

At the same time, the liberation movement must work out a programme by which it can contribute to solving the problem of the right wing through constructive action. Liberation in South Africa will not be achieved merely by taking up office in the Union Buildings. What we hope to achieve through liberation is a South

Africa which is run on the lines set down in the Freedom Charter. This cannot be brought about simply by the exercise of force, because the act of liberation applies not only to the bodies but also to the minds of all South Africans. A free people are free not only from racist laws but also from racist thoughts.

Recent events have proved abundantly that long-standing prejudice can be dispelled by personal contact. The wave of delegations that have visited Lusaka and Harare have brought significant sections of the population into contact with the ANC for the first time, and there is no doubt that the understanding which has flowed from these talks has helped to create the climate in which negotiations between the regime and the ANC have become feasible.

Equally there is no doubt that the absence of contact between the ANC and the more reactionary sections of the population, particularly among the whites, helps to fuel misconceptions and fear about the future. Is it not time to attempt to bridge the gap? How many of us can speak to people we call the Boers in their own language? How many of us have made a systematic study of their history and culture?

Of course these questions can equally be directed to right-wing whites. How many of them can speak an African language? What do they know about the history of the liberation movement? How many of them even think about the contribution blacks have made towards the development of our common homeland?

We are all citizens of one country and, as the Freedom Charter says, South Africa belongs to all who live in it. If we are not to be permanently at war, forever shooting and killing one another, we must learn to live together in peace and, if not to love one another, at least to tolerate one another as equals.

Looking at some of the more thuggish characters of the right wing in South Africa today, this may seem a remote prospect, but the fact remains that, come liberation, nobody is going to be exterminated, nobody is going to be driven into the sea, we are all going to have to learn to live together as best we can, in peace and harmony, equal citizens of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. It may be a long haul, but there is no reason why we cannot start learning how to do it now.

MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM LEADERSHIP GROUP

THE MEMBERS OF THE SACP Interim Leadership Group announced at the Party launch on July 29 are, in alphabetical order:

Ray Alexander (76) joined the communist underground in Latvia in 1928 and the following year arrived with her parents in South Africa. She played a central role in building trade unions in the Western Cape and became one of the leaders of the Food and Canning Workers' Union, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the Federation of South African Women. She was elected to Parliament by the African voters of the Western Cape in 1954, but was prevented from taking her seat under the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1965 she went into exile and became one of the women leaders of the ANC as well as an executive committee member of SACTU and a Central Committee member of the SACP.

Brian Bunting (70) joined the Party in 1940 and was elected to its Central Committee in 1948. He edited *Guardian*, *Advance*, *New Age* and *Spark* newspapers until the chain was closed down in 1963. Although banned in 1952, he was elected to Parliament by the African voters of the Western Cape in the same year, but was expelled from the House a year later under the Suppression of Communism Act. He was detained in the 1960 emergency and house arrested in 1962. In exile since 1963, he edited the SACP journal *The African Communist* from 1970 onwards and has written books on South African political history.

Cheryl Carolus (33) first became active in student politics in 1976 and helped build the United Democratic Front and women's organisations in the Western Cape. Since 1983 she has served on the UDF Western Cape regional executive committee.

Jeremy Cronin (40) joined the SACP as a student in the early 1970s when he was involved in underground Party propaganda. Detained in 1976, he spent seven years in Pretoria Central Prison. On his release he was elected regional education officer of the UDF in the Western Cape. He went into exile in 1987. He is a well-

known poet and has authored several books. He is an SACP Central Committee member.

Chris Dlamini (45), first became active in the trade union movement in 1972, and was later President of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). Now President of the Food and Allied Workers' Union and First Vice-president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

John Gomomo (43) was a key leader of FOSATU in the Eastern Cape and is at present Second Deputy President of COSATU and a member of the Central Committee of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA). He is a full-time shop steward at the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage and a member of the ANC Interim Leadership Core in the Eastern Cape.

Harry Gwala (70), trained as a teacher, became active in the trade union movement in the early 1940s, joined the Communist Party in 1942 and the ANC in 1944, playing an active role in the formation of the Youth League in Natal in 1948. Detained under the 90-day no-trial detention law in 1963, he was again arrested in 1964 and sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment for Umkhonto We Sizwe activities. Three years after his release he was again arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment on the same charge. He was released in 1988 on health grounds. He is convener of the Interim Leadership Core of the ANC in the Natal Midlands.

Chris Hani (48) joined the ANC in the late 1950s. After completing a BA degree at Fort Hare University, he became one of the leaders of MK in the Cape. He fought in the Wankie campaign in Zimbabwe in 1967, and was then jailed for two years in Botswana. Has been in and out of South Africa since 1973 and survived a number of assassination attempts. He has been a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC since 1974, is MK Chief of Staff, a member of the SACP Central Committee and Political Bureau.

Ronnie Kasrils (53) first became active in the Congress movement in the 1950s and joined MK in 1961 as a member of its Natal Regional Command. After going into exile he served in various capacities in MK including as deputy commissar and until last year as head of its military intelligence. He is a member of the NEC of the ANC, its Political Military Council and the Central Committee of the SACP.

Ahmed Kathrada (61) joined the Young Communist League at the age of 12 and five years later was imprisoned in the Passive Resistance Campaign. He was centrally involved in the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the 1955 Congress of the People which adopted the Freedom Charter. Active in the ANC underground since 1960 he was arrested at Rivonia in 1963 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Released last year he is head of publicity of the ANC's Interim Leadership Core.

Sathyandranath 'Mac' Maharaj (55) first became active in the Congress movement in 1951. Prominent in MK in the early 1960s, he was detained and severely tortured in 1964, after which he spent 12 years on Robben Island. He went into exile in 1977. He is a member of the ANC's Political Military Council, President's Committee and National Executive Committee, and of the SACP's Central Committee and Political Bureau. Based inside the country since 1987, he was detained and held under Section 29 (detention without trial) of the Internal Security Act at the time of the party launch.

Moses Mayekiso (42) first became active in the trade union movement as a factory worker 13 years ago. He became national organiser and then general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union and later general secretary of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa. Active in street committee organisation in Alexandra Township, he and four others were arrested and charged with treason in 1986. After a mammoth trial all five were acquitted in 1989. He is a recipient of a number of awards from the British trade union movement.

Govan Mbeki (80) joined the ANC in 1935 and went on to become one of its most prominent leaders. After obtaining his BA degree and an education diploma at Fort Hare University he went into teaching but in 1938 abandoned the profession and devoted himself to politics and writing. In 1954 he joined the editorial board of *New Age*. He has written several books on aspects of the liberation struggle. Active in MK from its foundation, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia trial of 1964. Released in 1988, he is today a member of the ANC's Interim Leadership Core.

Raymond Mhlaba (70) joined the ANC and Communist Party in the early 1940s and became a Port Elizabeth leader of both

organisations. He was also active in the trade union movement and became an office-bearer in the Laundry Workers' Union. Active in the 1952 Defiance Campaign, he served a total of 47 days imprisonment. In 1961 he went underground to become Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and was one of those arrested at Rivonia in 1963, sentenced to life imprisonment and released in December 1989. He is a member of the ANC's Interim Leadership Core and chairman of the SACP Interim Leadership Group.

Sydney Mufamadi (30) first became politically active as a student in Venda in 1976. He became a delivery driver, and later general secretary of the General and Allied Workers' Union. Since 1985 he has been assistant general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. He is Transvaal publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front.

Billy Nair (61) first became active in the trade union movement in the 1940s, later working fulltime as a union official. When SACTU was formed in 1955 he became a member of its first executive. He was tried for treason in 1956 and detained several times in the 1960s. A member of the MK regional command in Natal, he was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in 1964. On his release in 1984 he was elected to the National Executive Committee of the UDF and detained twice. He is a member of the ANC Interim Leadership Group in Natal. At the time of the SACP launch he was being held in detention under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

John Nkadimeng (63) became active in the Tobacco Workers' Union in 1948, joined the ANC in 1950 and the underground SACP in 1953. He was elected to the NEC of the ANC in 1955, and one year later was one of the 156 accused in the treason trial. He was banned and detained in 1963 and sentenced to three years imprisonment for furthering the aims of an unlawful organisation. He left the country in 1976. In exile he has served on the NEC of the ANC and the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the SACP. In 1983 he was elected general secretary of SACTU.

Essop Pahad (52) first became politically active in the Transvaal Indian Congress in the late 1950s and was elected to the TIC executive in the early 1960s, after which he was detained and then banned. In exile he served for 15 years as the SACP representative on the editorial committee of the *World Marxist*

Review. He is a Central Committee member of the SACP and a member of the editorial board of *The African Communist*.

Reginald September (67) became active as a Communist Party member in the Western Cape in the early 1950s and was an executive member of the Coloured People's Congress. He was one of the 156 activists tried for treason in 1956. In exile he served as ANC Chief Representative in the United Kingdom for several years and was a member of the ANC's Revolutionary Council and later the Political Military Council. He was elected to the NEC of the ANC in 1985 and is at present the convener of the Western Cape Interim Leadership Core of the ANC. He is a member of the SACP Central Committee.

Sizakele Sigxashe (52) joined the ANC in 1959 while a student at Fort Hare university, and later joined the SACP underground. He left the country in 1962 and completed a PhD in Moscow. He served on the ANC's Revolutionary Council and later the Political Military Council and was elected to the NEC in 1985. He is a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the SACP.

Joe Slovo (64) joined the Communist Party as a young worker in 1942. After qualifying as an advocate he served at the Johannesburg bar for several years. He was elected to the Central Committee of the underground Communist Party and was a founder member with Nelson Mandela of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961. He has been a member of the NEC of the ANC since 1985. In 1986, after the death of Yusuf Dadoo, he was elected national chairman of the SACP, and in 1987, after the death of Moses Mabhida, he became general secretary, whereupon he resigned his position as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. He is editor of *Umsebenzi*, the official organ of the Party.

Dan Tloome (73) joined the Communist Party in the late 1930s. Active in the trade union movement, he served in a leadership role in the Council of Non-European Trade Unions and the South African Congress of Trade Unions for over two decades. He became the ANC's first national organiser in 1947 and two years later was elected to the National Executive Committee. For the past 16 years he has lived in exile and is ANC auditor-general and a member of the President's Committee. He is national chairman of the SACP.

Nationalisation or Free Enterprise?

by Phineas Malinga

The Economic Policy of the National Democratic Revolution

IN ITS PROGRAMME ADOPTED in 1989, *The Path to Power*, the South African Communist Party declares:

"It must be one of the basic policies and aims of the national democratic state to raise the living standards of the people and, in particular, eradicate the centuries-old injustices perpetrated against the black majority. This applies to wages and job opportunities, education, housing, health and other amenities.

"In order to satisfy the needs of the people and ensure balanced and rapid development of the economy, it will be necessary to ensure popular control over vital sectors of the economy. This will entail the continual strengthening of the state sector in the mining, heavy industry, banks and other monopoly industries. The national democratic state will define the general parameters of economic activity. In addition, it must ensure that workers in particular and the people in general play an important role in the running of enterprises and that the necessary cadres are trained and deployed to serve the national interest. To fully eliminate the system of colonial domination, it will be necessary to ensure democratic ownership and control over decisive aspects of the economy. At the same time, the state will protect the interests of private business where these are not incompatible with the public interest.

"This applies equally to land distribution: there is an imperative need to restore land to the people. This will take a variety of forms, including state ownership of large-scale farms, distribution of land among the land-hungry masses and state assistance to them, the setting up of co-operative farms and guaranteeing the freedom of movement and settlement. It will also entail the task of overcoming the enormous economic underdevelopment of many rural regions."

In these words, our Party programme summarises the policies which we believe should be adopted in the economic sphere at the stage of the national democratic revolution. These policies fall into place in the broad scheme of our programme. Since we do not believe that socialism is the objective of the national democratic revolution, the economic policies which we propose for that revolution fall far short of being socialist. They are, obviously, compatible with our aim of moving on from the stage of national democracy to that of socialism. They are not, however, devised with the sole aim of facilitating that future transformation. It is our aim that the national democratic revolution should itself confer real benefits on the people. Though national democracy is not our final goal, it is nevertheless a goal which has its own validity, not simply a stepping-stone to something else.

The Freedom Charter

The question of economic policy has also received the attention of the broad liberation movement. The Freedom Charter contains the following well-known section

"THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH!"

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions."

The broad thrust of this formulation is clearly compatible with our Party programme. The Charter, however, is a short document which can only lay down basic principles. These principles have served the movement well during a period of more than thirty years. They are as fresh and as valid today as when they were first written. The movement has now, however, entered a period in which basic principles have to become the foundation of detailed policies. There are details to be filled in, general ideas to be concretely defined, practical questions to which principles have to be applied.

Some work towards these ends has already been done. The Constitutional Guidelines approved as a basis for discussion and consultation throughout the movement by the NEC of the ANC in 1988 contain the following propositions under the heading "Economy":

"The state shall ensure that the entire economy serves the interests and well-being of all sections of the population. The state shall have the right to determine the general context in which economic life takes place and define and limit the rights and obligations attaching to the ownership and use of private productive capacity.

"The economy shall be a mixed one, with a public sector, a private sector, a co-operative sector and a small scale family sector.

"Co-operative forms of economic enterprise, village industries and small scale family activities shall be supported by the state. The state shall promote the acquisition of managerial, technical and scientific skills among all sections of the population, especially the blacks.

"Property for personal use and consumption shall be constitutionally protected."

The function of the Constitutional Guidelines is to explain and amplify the Freedom Charter, not to change or supersede it. Nevertheless, the Guidelines were written with the benefit of thirty years of experience since the Charter was written and it would be surprising if there were not some difference of emphasis between the two documents. The difference of emphasis which does appear can be summarised by saying that the Guidelines are more cautious than the Charter about the role of the state in the economy.

The reason for this caution is no mystery. In Africa, Europe and Asia alike, the experience of the last thirty years suggests that state control of a national economy is not as simple a matter as it appeared to be in the middle years of this century. This experience has produced a variety of results. It lies behind the fashion for "privatisation" first set by the Thatcher government in Britain and now being followed in South Africa among other countries. In China it has led to a retreat from certain forms of state control. The Soviet Union has already made important changes in the methods of management of nationalised industry and there seem to be further changes to come. Throughout Africa there is a trend toward reconsideration of the respective roles of the public and private sectors of the economy.

Nationalisation

During the months since February 1990, the question whether, and to what extent, the ANC proposes to nationalise industry has received endless attention. Not only South African businessmen but also foreigners are fascinated by this question — for the obvious reason that their interests are at stake. The amount of attention devoted to this point is excessive but some discussion of it is unavoidable.

Neither the Freedom Charter nor the Constitutional Guidelines actually

uses the word "nationalisation" but the sentence in the Freedom Charter dealing with "transfer to the ownership of the people as a whole" has been generally understood to mean nationalisation.

Nationalisation, however, is not a simple concept, as an examination of the three categories of property singled out by the Charter for "transfer" will soon reveal. The first of these is "the mineral wealth beneath the soil" and it has obviously been given this prominent position because of the great importance of the mining industry to the South African economy. The authors of the Charter clearly had in mind that the mining industry generates enormous quantities of wealth, the distribution of which is a matter of social importance, and that the control of the mining industry confers upon those who exercise it both economic and political power.

It is, however, important to bear in mind that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil" is not private property under existing South African law. This is an important point of difference between South Africa and many other countries. In Britain, for instance, a landowner is considered to be the owner of minerals found beneath his land. Therefore the British coal mining industry had to pay "royalties" to landowners, and many aristocratic families of feudal origin received a new lease of life in the nineteenth century for this reason. The purely parasitic position occupied by these landowners was a longstanding grievance among British mineworkers and the nationalisation of the coal industry in 1947 had as one of its major objectives the ending of this system.

In South African law, however, minerals have never been the property of landowners. They belong to the state, which grants mining leases to the companies who operate mines. These leases involve a payment to the state and a redistribution of the proceeds of mining could be achieved without nationalisation, by a change in the terms on which mining leases are granted.

The Chamber of Mines

This, however, would leave the power of the Chamber of Mines substantially intact. That power has long been distrusted, not only by our liberation movement. The programme of the Nationalist Party included a proposal for the nationalisation of the gold mines for some years before they came to power in 1948. That part of their programme was never implemented because they came to see that their aim of increasing the role of Afrikaners in the management of the mining industry could be achieved by other means and that big capital was perfectly willing to enter into an alliance with them.

Forty years later, there is no shortage of hints that big capital would be prepared to enter into an alliance with the ANC if its position in South Africa were to be left substantially intact. The objective of obtaining a fair share of jobs in the mining industry for Africans is probably also attainable by means short of nationalisation. A certain degree of Africanisation of the upper ranks of the work force would be gladly undertaken by at least some of the mining houses. It might not take a great deal of pressure to push them further, into a vigorous campaign of affirmative action to redress the consequences of a century of racial discrimination in the industry.

If that were so, would it be an acceptable basis on which to leave the mining industry in the hands of its present owners? The answer has to be no. The power of the Chamber of Mines has been and is excessive. It has been and is being abused. To the century-old problem of the oligopolistic organisation of the mining industry has been added in recent decades the overwhelmingly dominant position of a single company — the Anglo American Corporation. The relatively progressive views held on several subjects by Anglo American do not alter the fact that its position is one which would be considered intolerable even in the heartlands of capitalism. When Standard Oil threatened to dominate the U.S. oil industry, the U.S. government intervened under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to break it up. No company occupies a position in the British, French, German or Japanese economy comparable to that occupied by Anglo American in the South African economy.

Does it then follow that the gold mines must be nationalised? Before answering this question, we must note that nationalisation can take different forms. What might be described as the classic form is that adopted in the Soviet Union, in the East European people's democracies other than Yugoslavia, by the British Labour Party and by a number of African and Asian governments, some avowedly socialist and others not. This involves the state taking over an entire industry and then running it in a centralised fashion, either under the direct control of a ministry or through the medium of a corporation created and controlled by the state.

Many Problems

This form of nationalisation has produced problems. Firstly, the sheer size of the organisations involved tends to lead to bureaucracy and lack of flexibility. Secondly, the officials who run such organisations tend to think that, having abolished the profit motive, they have also abolished the need for accountancy. They set themselves targets in terms of quantities of goods

produced, on the plausible assumption that the more goods are produced, the more the wealth of the community is increased. They pursue these targets single-mindedly and are congratulated when they achieve them. Meanwhile, the question of the cost of production is swept under the carpet. The fact that the same, or better, goods could be produced with less labour and less raw materials is ignored.

The Soviet Union has suffered severely from these problems. In recent years, efforts have been made to solve them by decentralisation, offering economic incentives to separate enterprises and subjecting all enterprises to the rule of "full cost accounting." These solutions are making progress but it is as yet too early to say that an entirely successful system exists.

Meanwhile, the British electricity industry has thrown up a vivid illustration of the tendency for costs to be concealed under a system of centralised state administration of a large industry. For decades the nationalised British electricity industry worked on the assumption that nuclear power was cheaper than power produced by burning coal or oil. The political origin of this assumption is clear — successive British governments wanted to have a nuclear power industry for military and prestige reasons. But when the Thatcher government decided to privatise electricity and the real sums had to be done, in public, it turned out that nuclear power is in fact considerably more expensive.

A crucial fact about the South African gold mining industry is that it produces a commodity which has to be sold on world markets at a price which the mines can perhaps influence by their marketing tactics but certainly do not control. The welfare of the industry — not only its owners but also its workers — and its contribution to the national balance of payments depend on its ability to keep production costs per ounce of gold below the market price. Does the ANC possess an alternative cadre of senior management who could be guaranteed to improve upon the performance of the present management in this respect? The answer is no. What then would be achieved by changing the structure of the industry from near monopoly to complete monopoly and putting civil servants in charge? The answer is doubtful. Therefore the application of the classical form of nationalisation to the gold mines is a project of doubtful worth.

Worker Control

An alternative form of nationalisation, associated particularly with Yugoslavia, is that in which enterprises retain their separate identities and freedom of action but are controlled by their workers (in practice this means

that the management are elected by the workers under standard procedures laid down by law). This has attractions: it is a democratic system which avoids excessive bureaucracy, allows enterprises to operate flexibly and ensures that they are accountable for the costs of their operations. On the other hand, it fails to facilitate the rational planning of the economy as a whole and is open to the danger that the workers in a particular enterprise may become a vested interest, behaving in ways contrary to the interests of consumers and of the community in general.

A third problem of nationalisation is typified by France. The original postwar nationalisations were carried out neither by the Communists nor even by the socialists but by General de Gaulle. His motives were mixed and pragmatic. In the financial sector, he wished to give the government a sufficient grip on the economy to enable it to guide the process of postwar reconstruction. In certain other cases, firms were nationalised because of the role which their owners had played in collaborating with Nazi Germany.

Nationalised enterprises, as a general rule, retained their identities and had to compete with others which remained in private hands. The make-up of particular sectors has thus been able to change over the years. In the car manufacturing industry, for example, there was one large nationalised company — Renault — and three smaller private companies — Peugeot, Citroen and Simca. The three have since merged, to give a sector divided between one public and one private company. In insurance, the four largest companies were nationalised and for over thirty years those four continued to occupy the first four places in the industry league table. Recently, however, a privately-owned company has expanded to such an extent that it now ranks second.

Though this system has been the subject of much controversy between the parties of the right and those of the left, it has remained substantially intact and has on the whole worked well. By giving the government an active and weighty presence in key sectors of the economy, it makes national planning a more practical proposition than it would be in an economy wholly in private hands. At the same time it avoids unwieldy state monopolies and ensures that nationalised industries are subject to financial disciplines.

Breaking Up Monopolies

Alongside French-style nationalisation it is interesting to consider the use of "anti-trust" legislation to break up monopolies. This is a subject which has received little attention among Marxists. We have tended to dismiss such legislation as an irrelevance which, of course, it is if one is thinking in terms of

the transition to socialism. Laws to stimulate competition and break up monopolies cannot remedy the faults of capitalism, neither can they eradicate the tendency towards monopoly which is built into capitalism. The task of a Monopolies Commission or similar authority in a capitalist country is rather like that of a builder of sea walls in a low-lying country threatened by floods. The job has continually to be done again and in the long term it is probably doomed to failure. That, however, does not necessarily make it a waste of time. In the short term it can prevent some of the grossest abuses, improve the position of the consumer and sharpen the performance of the economy.

An immediate programme for the mining industry might therefore be based upon three proposals —

1. revise the terms of mining leases so as to increase the state's share of the proceeds of mining
2. use anti-monopoly legislation to break up the largest of the mining finance houses
3. nationalise one or more, but not all, of the resulting smaller groups.

If this could be achieved by agreement with the business community, it would enable the new South African government to break decisively out of the international isolation to which apartheid has condemned South Africa and to embark with confidence on the enormous economic tasks which confront us.

A similar approach might be the correct one in the banking sector. As the channel through which capital flows, or fails to flow, to all other sectors of the economy, banking is of primary importance. The Reserve Bank plays an important role in regulating and guiding the sector but it alone does not constitute a sufficient state presence. On the other hand, to nationalise the entire sector would be to throw down a gauntlet not only to the South African bourgeoisie but to the whole capitalist world. It would involve the new government in a conflict which would drag on for decades and which, given the present balance of power in the world, South Africa would be unlikely to win. Moreover, it would risk placing this crucial and complex sector of the economy under management which would lack the necessary experience and skills. Therefore the solution may be first to use monopoly legislation to break up undesirable ties between banks and other enterprises and then to nationalise one bank.

To put the whole question of the nationalisation or otherwise of existing enterprises into perspective, it is vital to remember the extent to which the present situation relegates South Africans to a subsistence economy lying outside the whole system of industry, commerce and cash-crop agriculture. Because the population is expanding but the economy is not, the situation is getting steadily worse. Some economists estimate that the number of actual earners of significant money incomes is as low as thirty per cent of the total of potential wage earners in the population. The other seventy per cent are either subsistence peasant farmers or urban unemployed. The economic policy of a democratic South Africa must address the plight of these people as a matter of the greatest urgency.

Enlarging the Cake

The terms in which the political debate has been conducted over the years have given the left certain reflex actions which are not to be trusted. The left (not only scientific socialists but social democrats and others as well) is rightly concerned with the redistribution of wealth and the elimination of inequality. The right seeks to discredit this objective and divert attention from it by saying "Never mind how the cake is cut up; the important thing is to increase the total size of the cake." The left believes that rational planning and clear political objectives can make things possible which are not possible under capitalism. The right tries to pour cold water on such ideas by asking "Where is the money going to come from?" The result has been that many people on the left have come to think that "Where is the money going to come from?" is a question which ought not to be asked and the increase of the total wealth of the nation an objective which ought not to be emphasised.

These are errors. Redistribution of wealth is important but it is not enough. This is particularly true in Africa at the present time because of the relentless pace at which the population increases. Recent calculations by the United Nations indicate that the population of Africa will more than double between now and 2025. Unless present rates of economic growth are substantially improved, this implies a steady deterioration in standards of living. South Africa is, on present trends, no exception.

Therefore the overriding duty of a democratic government of South Africa will be to ensure that the economy grows at a rate which will not only keep pace with the growth of population but substantially exceed it, so that the large section of the population which is at present left out of the productive economy can be brought into it.

How is this to be done? There is no magic formula. The history of our century is full of examples of governments which decided to impose some master plan involving the reconstruction of a whole nation on a uniform pattern. Time after time, such experiments have had to be abandoned. We should rather try to advance upon many fronts, using a variety of methods, working with the grain of the people's traditions and habits, not against it.

This is what the Constitutional Guidelines have in mind in speaking of "a public sector, a private sector, a co-operative sector and a small-scale family sector." The state, it is suggested, should not go beyond determining "the general context in which economic life takes place" and should support "co-operative forms of economic enterprise, village industries and small-scale family activities." This is an explanation, not a contradiction, of the statement in the Freedom Charter that "all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people."

Control is a variable concept. All governments control trade and industry in some degree. Both the absence of any control and the exercise of total control are dogmatic illusions. In the past, South African governments have exercised a relatively high degree of control but for the wrong purposes. The present government, with its irrelevant privatisation schemes, is veering towards the illusion of no control. The policy documents of the ANC do not embrace the opposite illusion of total control but correctly define the purpose of control and make it clear that the state should not hesitate to play an active role.

Overseas Capital

The necessary expansion of the South African economy will undoubtedly require the investment of large amounts of capital. Where is this to come from? We can unhesitatingly say that as much as possible should be mobilised internally. South Africa has not been immune from the tendency, so marked in recent times among the advanced capitalist nations, for the owners of finance capital to use it for speculation in preference to productive investment. This tendency must be corrected, not only by means of controls but also by the positive action of the state through its presence in the banking sector.

There is also room for the diversion of funds from conspicuous consumption by the upper and middle classes to productive investment. This can readily be achieved by means of taxation, but the ease with which it can be done should not lead us to think that there are no pitfalls. The rich in South Africa are not numerous and the amounts which can be raised by tax

increases are not large by comparison with the numerous competing needs for investment in different types of activity and different parts of the country. Nothing is easier than to sink large sums of money in prestige projects which do little good at the end of the day.

A democratic South African government will have to develop hard-headed and realistic criteria for investment projects. Since unemployment is the greatest problem, there will be an obvious requirement that investment must create jobs — the more the better. The trouble is, however, that labour-intensive methods of production are often less productive than those which make use of advanced technology. If the consumer ends up paying more for inferior goods, the community as a whole is not enriched. Therefore we cannot make a fetish of labour-intensiveness, neither can we reject technology, including imported technology. Alongside the criterion of job creation must stand that of consumer satisfaction and the long-term viability of projects in the context of both national and international competition.

The reference to international competition raises the question — to what extent should a democratic South African government allow South African industry to be subject to international competition? At present, South Africa is a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) but not of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Membership of OECD would involve a commitment to virtually complete free trade, with no possibility of protecting nascent industries against the full rigours of international competition. Nobody has suggested that South Africa should join OECD and that probability can be ruled out.

Membership of GATT involves less rigorous commitments and includes the majority of developing countries. A revision of GATT is currently being negotiated and the developing countries, led by India, Brazil and Egypt, are working strongly for a proper recognition of their special needs. South Africa's current diplomatic isolation means that no contribution is being made to this debate. A democratic South Africa could play an active and prominent part and could add valuable weight to the arguments of the developing countries.

Some on the left would prefer to see South Africa withdraw from GATT. They argue that acceptance of any treaty commitments to free trade restricts the ability of a democratic government to give priority to indigenous development and gives openings for foreign capitalists to profit at the expense of the South African people. Though these arguments are not without merit and might indeed prevail in the period of transition to

socialism, the balance of advantage in the immediate future seems clearly in favour of remaining in GATT. By doing so, markets for South African exports can be significantly improved, while the strength of the developing country bloc in GATT ensures that the price will not be too high.

Foreign Control

We have digressed from the question of capital for economic growth. The domestic sources of such capital are, we have said, important but limited. To what extent should a democratic South Africa seek overseas capital? This has been a perennial and difficult question for all developing countries (indeed, it has recently become a difficult question for yesterday's principal exporter and today's largest importer of capital, the United States of America). The dilemma is simply stated. A poor country can, by importing capital, make developments possible which would otherwise be impossible. If, however, the importation of capital takes the form of investment in the poor country by multinational corporations, the result is that key productive facilities in that country are in foreign hands.

This result is unpalatable and in recent decades many newly independent developing countries have gone to considerable lengths to avoid it. Government borrowing has been seen as a preferable alternative to inward investment by the private sector. Unfortunately, government borrowing has been allowed to assume absurd dimensions. Especially in Latin America, but not only there, governments have borrowed such huge amounts that the entire foreign exchange earnings of their countries are insufficient to pay the interest, never mind the sums borrowed. In many cases, little or no benefit has been derived from these loans. Sometimes the money borrowed has simply been stolen by corrupt dictators or the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In other cases it has been wasted on grandiose, ill-chosen projects, on armaments or simply on conspicuous consumption by a wealthy minority of the population.

Today, some governments are trying to extricate themselves from the mess by "debt for equity swaps". This means privatisation of state-owned industries and payment of the government's debts by allocation of shares in such industries to the creditor banks. It is certainly a worse solution than allowing foreign capital to establish industries in the first place.

Foreign Investment is Welcome

Dogmatic opposition to foreign investment therefore seems an unpromising line to pursue. The ANC is in fact not pursuing it; in the course of his epic

world tour in June and July 1990, Deputy President Nelson Mandela gave clear indications that foreign investment in the future democratic South Africa would be welcome. This is a position with which we can agree.

It is, of course, necessary for foreign investment to be carefully monitored. Three issues can be identified in this connection. First, the total volume of foreign investment needs to be monitored, so that the economy is not dominated by it. In this respect, the evolution of recent decades has been favourable. The South African economy was dominated by British and American capital in the first half of the twentieth century. Since then, there has been deliberate action by South African governments to reduce that domination, combined with some repatriation of capital by foreign investors in response to sanctions campaigns. The present role of foreign investors is considerably less than it was forty years ago and there is some room for an increase.

Secondly, the nature of foreign investment needs to be monitored. If left to please themselves, multinational companies may wish to set up so-called "screwdriver plants" in a country such as South Africa. These are simple assembly operations which take advantage of low wage levels in a developing country to site the semi-skilled work of assembling components there while the highly skilled work of making the components is still done in the home country of the multinational country. Though even an operation of this kind may have something to offer to a developing country with high unemployment, it is a much inferior alternative to the transfer to that country of a whole manufacturing operation, with all the technology involved. A democratic South Africa will have considerable attractions to multinationals as a base from which to penetrate the African market as a whole. Its government should be in a position to insist on a high level of transfer of technology.

Thirdly, the source of foreign investment should be monitored so as to prevent any one foreign company or country from establishing an excessively powerful position. Britain had such a position in the past but for a considerable number of years the trend has been for the British share of foreign investment in South Africa to diminish. Britain has now only a limited ability to export capital and there is no need for any special precautions against the re-establishment of British hegemony. The world leader in capital export is now Japan and the question of commercial relations with Japan should receive more attention than it has done up till now.

A danger of Japanese hegemony does exist, if only in the long term given the modest levels of Japanese investment in South Africa to date. Therefore

vigilance is necessary. On the other hand, Japan has much to offer, including the most advanced technology and an egalitarian, up-to-date approach to the organisation of industrial enterprises. The introduction of new Japanese capital could also contribute towards the breaking up of the monopolistic structures at present characteristic of the South African economy. Therefore the ANC might be well advised to adopt a positive attitude towards Japanese investment, while at the same time making it clear that there are clear criteria as to the quality of investment and clear limits on its total quantity.

National Debate

This article represents an attempt by one individual to expand upon some themes drawn from the policy documents of our movement. Decisions are not for the author but for the people, acting through our Party, through our national liberation movement and, eventually, through a democratically elected South African Parliament. These matters need to be debated up and down the country, the most important theatre of debate for the immediate future being the preparations for the national conference of the ANC. The time is not far off when the people's representatives will have to assume new and formidable responsibilities. They must be adequately prepared. It is the author's hope that this article may make some contribution to the process of preparation.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

As from the next issue No. 124 First Quarter 1991
The African Communist will be printed in South Africa.
 Our new address will be:

The African Communist,
c/o South African Communist Party,
P.O. Box 2424,
Johannesburg 2000

Telephone: Johannesburg 836-6867

All correspondence should be addressed to our office in Johannesburg. The London office of *The African Communist* and Inkululeko Publications will be closed down by December 1990.

The Bantustan System is at the Centre of Natal Violence

by Mzala

FROM THE DRAKENSBURG to the Indian Ocean, the once great and historic hills now stand desolate, as the earth and the human spirit have torn away like flesh. Down in the countryside valleys women are scratching the red earth for a livelihood as well as burying their dead. Maize hardly reaches the height of a man, much as children no longer grow into old age. In Natal, the soil and the bantustan politics cannot keep the people alive any longer.

When the late Alan Paton wrote his famous novel *Cry the Beloved Country* in 1948, he spoke of Natal as one of the fairest valleys of Africa, with its rolling hills that were once so grass-covered that one could not see the soil; valleys where one could still hear the forlorn crying of the titihoye (one of the birds of the veld); but valleys which, however, had fallen victim to the processes of deterioration both natural and political. His lament might well have been a forecast of the tragedy that has developed in the country forty years later.

The titihoye does not cry here any more, only the sounds of pangas and gunshots provide the lightning to the dark and cloudy sky.

Looking back now over the past forty years, it seems inevitable that the bantustan policy of the Nationalist Party should have led to a disaster for the country. The violence that currently characterises Natal, violence which has been used by the government as a pretext for not lifting the state of emergency, is essentially the climax of the apartheid policy of the bantustans.

Economically designed to keep within their territories all those who are superfluous to the immediate labour requirements of the white industries, and allowing them out only when their labour is required by this or that branch of production, the bantustans have, as predicted, ended up as overcrowded, eroded and fragmented rural and semi-urban slums without any economic viability of their own except as leisure resorts for tourists

seeking the thrills of gambling, pornography and prostitution which are banned in "white" South Africa. The overall social effects of this political experiment on the black people are incalculable.

At the political level, the government had hoped that all the African people would be stripped of their South African citizenship by belonging to different ethnic nationalities, each locked in an "independent" state, in which they would then exercise "their right to self-determination". This strategy has essentially ended up as a disaster, too, except for its side-effect, which has been to create a tiny collaborative black puppet stratum whose entire political existence rests on the survival of the apartheid system. It is this surrogate political force which, over the years, has been the visible channel through which the South African government has unleashed its extreme repression against the rising challenge of the democratic movement.

KwaZulu

KwaZulu, which was among the last of the bantustans to be accorded the "self-governing" status, has proved to be among the foremost in serving the grand objective of the bantustan strategy.

If the political design or side-effect of the bantustan system has been the consolidation of ethnic chauvinism and the corresponding development of an intolerant attitude towards national unity among the oppressed, as well as hostility to their democratic organisations, then neither the Matanzima brothers nor Mangope has surpassed the KwaZulu government leadership in that regard.

It is hard, if not impossible, to imagine how the Natal violence, now claiming thousands of lives, would ever have occurred in the first place if the KwaZulu bantustan had not been established by the government. The undeniable fact that several leading members of Inkatha's Central Committee have been detained, charged or sued for activities linked to the vigilante actions against the democratic movement, while not a single leader of the ANC, UDF, COSATU or SACP has ever been in such a position, only serves to demonstrate that even at the Central Committee level of Inkatha's structure there exist individual personalities or undefined organs which are committed to the perpetration of violence in Natal.

Although often presented by its leadership as something of an exception to the bantustan scheme, the KwaZulu government has in every respect, and for all strategic intents and purposes, been at the service of the apartheid system. While the formal declaration of "independence" might be regarded as the best and, perhaps, the final proof of a bantustan's collaboration with

the apartheid system, this is not the decisive test. Crucial to the apartheid government's political strategy is the division of the oppressed people into ethnic groups as well as the repression of the organisations that seek to unite them in their struggle for liberation. The KwaZulu government fulfilled this role par excellence, without the need to ask for "independence".

With all their "independences" as well as varying degrees of repression of the democratic movement, the Transkei and the Ciskei never turned the country into mass killing fields in the manner in which Natal has become the 'Valley of a Thousand Deaths'.

Popular Rejection

When in the early 1950s the government first introduced the idea that the Zulu people, like other Africans, were to be administered as an exclusive ethnic entity by government-appointed chiefs, the implementation of the project aroused such fierce popular opposition that, without exaggeration, an open revolt in districts such as Thokazi, near Nongoma, turned these areas into semi-insurrectionary zones. These events were followed by mass public trials and deportations of non-collaborating chiefs. Chief Albert Lutuli, then President of the ANC, was one of those chiefs who were removed from office for refusing to collaborate with the government in the implementation of this policy.

Contrary to several public statements uttered by Chief Buthelezi to the effect that he "stomped the length and breadth of KwaZulu" leading the campaign to oppose the Bantu Authorities Act, the facts of history show that he never took up a position that challenged this government policy at the time. In a letter written to the *New Age* newspaper (December 17, 1959) Chief Buthelezi admits that he never "ever declared any hostility to the establishment of Bantu Authorities" and "I have never opposed the Government either by an act of commission or omission".

Yet the Bantu Authorities Act had been one of the six laws which had been selected by the ANC as the focus of protest by the 1952 Defiance Campaign. It would seem, therefore, that Chief Buthelezi's non-hostility to such a repressive law, a law that sought ultimately to deprive the Zulu people of their South African citizenship, provided the basis for the government's initial trust that he would be one of those chiefs who, unlike Chief Lutuli, could be relied upon to shoulder the unpopular task of convincing his people about the need to accept such an Act.

Chief Buthelezi has also argued that he only took up the role as a leader of the KwaZulu government because, following the Rivonia arrests, there was

no other chance of serving his people in politics except through the bantustan system, which alone offered an avenue for criticising the apartheid system without the risk of arrest. Now that the Rivonia prisoners have been released and the political organisations unbanned, implying the opening up of possibilities to oppose apartheid outside of the bantustan system, the question must be asked why Chief Buthelezi continues to operate within the KwaZulu government structure.

Dismantling Bantustans

It is within the context of these questions that the democratic movement needs to place the call for the immediate dismantling of the bantustans at the head of the agenda of the campaign to stop the vigilantes in Natal. This matter must ultimately be presented in a manner that goes beyond an exercise in dealing with effects, such as whether or not Chief Buthelezi, or any other bantustan official for that matter, occupies this or that post in the system.

It is the KwaZulu bantustan that provides the social facilities and the protection machinery for the vigilantes. As the effective ruling party in KwaZulu, Inkatha functions only through the structures of this bantustan. And as long as those structures fit into the apartheid strategy like a plug into a socket, Inkatha will continue to transmit the violent apartheid current that has caused the deaths of so many people.

Central to any strategy dealing with the bantustan question is the mobilisation of the rural masses and their organisations as a mighty force of resistance against apartheid. Results may not be quick and easy, but a basis will be laid for irreversible progress on the path towards the dismantling of apartheid.

It is in this sense, and perhaps in this sense alone, that bantustans should be regarded as terrains of struggle.

Gatsha's Police Chief

Meanwhile an inkling of the apartheid regime's intentions in KwaZulu has been provided by the recently appointed KwaZulu police chief Jac Buchner in an interview published in the *Sowetan* newspaper (July 31, 1990).

Speaking to a small group of foreign journalists in his office at Ulundi, Buchner said that before coming to KwaZulu he had spent 23 years fighting the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations. He was a leading state witness in trials of "black revolutionaries". He had a dossier on every member of the ANC, he boasted.

"I was chief of Pretoria's terrorist research centre and it was my task to do as much as I could to disrupt the ANC and spoil their attempts to bring South Africa down".

The *Sowetan* report goes on:

"Buchner says the ANC and the Communist Party set out to destroy the Zulu nation and its leaders because they feared the seven million Zulus could form an all-powerful alliance with South Africa's five million whites, dominating a handful of smaller tribes.

"The only way you can destroy that (possibility) is to sideline the Zulu nation', he said.

"Buchner believes in the potential of a whites-Zulu alliance. He says South Africa's future is forming along tribal lines and the Zulus traditionally form the biggest and most solid ethnic grouping.

"He recalled being told as a child: 'The man who holds the Zulu by the hand controls South Africa'.

"I don't know if I'm in the right place or the wrong place', he added. 'Maybe this is just being facetious but if Buthelezi becomes president, maybe he'll look after me. I think I'm in the right place'".

KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of Inkatha, which has just converted itself into a 'national' political party, is also Minister of the KwaZulu Police and Buchner's boss. The *Sowetan* comments: "Perhaps his most difficult task under the circumstances is to win recognition as an impartial administrator of justice".

READ UMSEBENZI

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Available from Inkululeko Publications

P.O. Box 2424

JOHANNESBURG 2000

PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM — 1

The Umsebenzi discussion pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* by Joe Slovo, general secretary of the South African Communist Party, has generated widespread discussion both inside and outside the SACP, nationally and internationally. *The African Communist* has received a number of contributions to the debate from readers, and we propose to print some of these responses in this and future issues of the journal. The fact of publication does not indicate support for the views published, but a desire to continue the debate so that all viewpoints can be aired. Further contributions to the debate are invited from readers.

Let Us Look at History in the Round

by Harry Gwala

IT IS A COMMON THING TODAY for many theoreticians on the problems of socialism to open their writings with the denunciation of Stalin. This sort of nihilism only clouds the issue and does not deal with the problems of socialism scientifically. It would be a serious mistake to take Stalin as someone existing in a void.

Let us start by quoting Paul A. Baran in his *Political Economy of Growth*, 1962:

"Krushchev's revelations concerning some aspects of Stalin's rule and subsequent events in Poland and Hungary have brought into the open with renewed force the steepness of the backward countries' ascent to a better and richer society. But it is merely the cult of personality in reverse to ascribe all crimes and errors committed in the Soviet Union before the Second World War and in all of Eastern and South Eastern Europe after it to the evil personalities of Stalin, Beria and their associates. Matters are not so simple, and the general feeling is wholly understandable that it is indeed the 'entire system' that must be held responsible for what was perpetrated by the leadership.

"Yet it is a grievous fallacy to conclude from this that socialism itself is part of the 'entire system' that needs to be repudiated. For it is not socialism that can be fairly charged with the misdeeds of Stalin and his puppets. It is the political system that evolved from the drive to develop at breakneck speed a backward country threatened by foreign aggression and in face of internal resistance. The emergency of such a political system under unique circumstances prevailing in Russia after Hitler's seizure of power and in the countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe during the frightening years of the cold war does not prove that socialism is inherently a system of terror and repression. What it does mean, and this is a historical lesson of paramount importance, is that socialism in backward and underdeveloped countries has a powerful tendency to become a backward and underdeveloped socialism."¹

Here is a scientific approach to a complicated problem which is expected of any Marxist-Leninist who employs his/her tools of dialectical materialism.

The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party developed out of the most autocratic conditions in Europe. For the party to survive it was necessary to have the strictest methods of organisation, what Lenin called 'iron discipline'. In the laws of contradictions where there is interpenetration of opposites, the Tsarist system was bound to have some effect on the party relating to its democratic practices. Taking into account that bourgeois democratic norms were not yet well developed in Tsarist Russia, the party had to observe strict underground methods of operation with democratic centralism being the criterion.

The Bolsheviks, it must be remembered, were the first to establish a Marxist state on earth in a very hostile environment. Speaking of this feature, Stalin in his *Problems Of Leninism* says an example of the problems facing the young socialist state was

"The fact that dictatorship of the proletariat became established in our country as a result of the victory of socialism in one country — a country in which capitalism was still little developed — while capitalism was preserved in other countries where capitalism was more developed."²

Of course quoting Stalin today has become heresy. However, dialectical laws demand that we look at things from all sides and not be one-sided in our approach. We must also look at them in their processes of development and change.

Gorbachev argues that we must take both the positive and the negative side of Stalin so that we can properly place him in history. No doubt there were many excesses committed during the time of Stalin, and wrong interpretations of events too. But who is not wiser after the event? It is very easy for us living in our time outside the situation to apportion blame for all that was done in the past. Need we forget what Marx and Engels said: "our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action?" It is also important to remember that by and large theory is the product of practice and that since there was no practice of scientific socialism before the October Revolution the first builders would flounder about.

Socialism in Eastern Europe

Without a proper background to the history of Eastern Europe we may draw misleading conclusions about the problems of socialism. Socialism is not something that can be exported. It must develop out of the objective conditions in each given country. Although in his analysis of imperialism Lenin did indicate that the conditions for the outbreak of the revolutions in the world would depend on the weakest link of the chain, this could not be interpreted mechanistically.

Except for Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe, as Comrade Gus Hall recently pointed out in an article, was under various forms of dictatorship on the eve of the Second World War. Unlike Western Europe which had fully developed bourgeois democracies, except for Spain and Portugal (and of course Nazi Germany and fascist Italy) the communist parties enjoyed legality and were in one way or the other influenced by the democratic practices of their own countries. No doubt if socialism after the Second World War had started in these countries rather than Eastern Europe the story would be a different one. All the conditions for the building of socialism were there.

Most of the leaders of the parties of Eastern Europe spent much of their time in the Soviet Union because of persecution in their countries. It is not certain how much the parties were developed in these countries. This is demonstrated by the fact that in a number of these countries the Communist Parties had to merge with other working class parties in order to assume power. In this way the tenets of Marxism-Leninism were somewhat diluted.

It must also be born in mind that these countries did not move direct from dictatorship to socialism but had to go through a stage known as People's Democracy.

The Role of the Red Army

Could we say that the advent of socialism in Eastern Europe followed the Leninist tenets, the chain of imperialism snapping off at its weakest link? If we take Cuba for example we find that the dollar imperialism snapped off in Cuba, this resulting in the building of socialism in that country. Similarly in Vietnam, although engaged in a long war of national liberation, the dominant force was always the Vietnamese Communist Party and the main content of the revolution was class, while the form was national liberation. The mainstay of the revolution was the alliance of the Party and the peasants in this National Liberation.

The main content of the struggle against Nazism during the Second World War was the destruction of fascism. Even the bourgeoisie were involved in this struggle against fascism. As far as the bourgeoisie were concerned their main concern was the preservation of bourgeois democracy and the capitalist system. The gains made by the working class under bourgeois democracy were worth defending. But in defending those gains the working class was also fighting to change the capitalist system and replace it by a new and higher system. There are no indications suggesting that the working class of Eastern Europe would have achieved this by themselves. Save for Yugoslavia the partisan forces had not developed into a position where they could engage the Nazi forces in conventional warfare. It is here that the Red Army comes in.

It is the Red Army, starting from the victories of Stalingrad, that inflicted blow after blow on the Nazi hordes, which led to the liberation of Eastern Europe. Here was liberation more or less handed over to the people of Eastern Europe. Precisely because some of these countries did not have strong communist parties, they had to enter into alliances with their own national bourgeoisie and rich peasants. In this way the People's Democracies were born, bringing together an alliance of parties with different class interests. There is no indication that if elections were held the people of Eastern Europe would have returned the working class governments to power. To imagine that in the period from 1946 to 1989 capitalist and rich peasant interests based on private ownership of the means of production and profit-making would be done away with in less than half a century, when

private property had been with us from the breakdown of tribal society, would be to expect the impossible.

The Spectre of Fascism

The new governments of Eastern Europe were haunted by the fear of the overthrown forces of fascism whose revival they dreaded. In this way criticism was associated with the counter-revolution. Such an attitude encouraged bureaucratic practices. Obviously this led to the stifling of people's democracy and later socialist democracy. We would like to lay emphasis on this because there is a tendency with some theoreticians to speak of democracy in the abstract when in fact there is no such thing. Even in Greece, where the term democracy meaning rule of the people was first popularised, slaves were regarded merely as articulate tools. The poor peasants were engaged in a class struggle against the big slave owners. Those who fell into debt were themselves threatened with slavery. Our bourgeois democracy, in which so many of us take pride, in the final analysis is the rule of capital. Under socialism we have a socialist democracy which in the final analysis is the rule of the working class. The dictatorship of the proletariat as distinct from the dictatorship of capital must be understood in this context. The material conditions of development require that ideas must also correspond to these objective conditions. But it often happens that ideas tend to lag behind material development. Adjustment at times has to be effected through a revolution. When the threat of fascism and war had receded the countries of Eastern Europe still clung to bureaucratic practices which stifled progress and development. If socialism had to satisfy the material needs of the people of Europe it had not only to deliver the goods but had also itself to develop. This is where *perestroika* comes in. No system can afford to be static. Socialism itself is in a state of development.

In examining the problems of socialism both in the Soviet Union and elsewhere it would be unfortunate if we were to be one-sided and ignore the many achievements made by socialism. Comrade J.S. deals rather harshly with developments in the Soviet Union. He does not give us a scientific analysis of why, when all the other powers of Europe, including the highly-developed France, collapsed in the face of the Nazi onslaught, the Soviet Union was able to survive and triumph. Modern warfare is a highly sophisticated industry. To equip and train a modern army presupposes a considerable amount of industrial development. The article by comrade J.S. does not explain how the Soviet Union, in the short space of time from Tsarist days, was able to develop the strength to withstand the Nazi war machine

when 24 years earlier the Tsarist army with its superior manpower just collapsed in 1917. Comrade J.S. dismisses all this by saying that “statistics showing high growth rates during Stalin’s time prove only that methods of primitive accumulation can stimulate *purely* (my emphasis) quantitative growth in early stages of capitalism or socialism — but at what human cost?”

Comrade J.S. has unfortunately not supplied us with any facts showing how a new social system in such hostile and threatening environment could make such phenomenal achievements. We cannot talk as if the Soviet Union developed in a healthy environment. How can we overlook the intervention of the imperialist countries, friend and foe, in the early days of the Soviet Union when people like Winston Churchill spoke of destroying the chicken? Wasn’t this subsequently followed by the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis? It is common knowledge that spies and saboteurs were being infiltrated into the Soviet Union. Naturally this brought about much suspicion and apprehension. The excesses committed under Stalin, while not justified, must be seen in this light.

We must also not discard our means of examining situations — dialectical and historical materialism. While denigrating Stalin as the villain of the piece, comrade J.S. gives the impression that Gorbachev is the first among equals. He seems to overlook the process that had taken place since the Twentieth Congress and that comrades like Andropov were equally concerned with developing socialism and correcting the mistakes of the past. Gorbachev must be seen historically as a member of a team and not as one who wields a magic wand. To scoop him out of the Central Committee collective is to embark on an idealistic approach to history, where history is made by individuals and not a collective or the people.

Marxism-Leninism, the Weapon of the Working Class

Marxism, right from the outset, was beset with problems either of dogmatism or revisionism. The defeat of Hitler brought high expectations to humanity. Socialism became very fashionable. In 1946 Cachin, one of the leading members of the Communist Party of France, was elected president of France. In Italy in the 1948 elections, the Communist Party became the strongest party in the country. Socialism was indeed in the air. History was, however, to prove otherwise. The expectations did not take into account that the war had made the United States very rich and she was to use this wealth to maintain capitalism in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa — if needs be by war. She threatened everyone with the newly discovered atom bomb

which was tested on the people of Japan. The American troops saw to it that the working class was stifled in Europe.

Faced with this dilemma and finding themselves frustrated, the parties of Europe began to look for other interpretations of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The so-called structural reforms and the birth of Euro-communism must be seen in this light. They talked of giving socialism a "human face". How many faces has socialism as propounded by Marx and Engels? To us Marx's socialism has only one face, the scientific face.

We are told that "...they were not infallible", and the communist leaders were not always correct in their projections. Lenin, for example, said that capitalism was about to collapse world-wide in the post-October period. It was a belief based on the incorrect premise that as a system capitalism was in an irreversible crisis and that capitalist relations of production constituted an obstacle to the further all-round development of the forces of production. J.S. does not tell us about the objective conditions which led Lenin to reach such a conclusion. To state the matter as he has done gives the impression that Lenin was engaged in speculative thinking and not dialectical thinking.

The class struggle has not abated in recent years. It takes different forms at different times and in different places. For the working class not to sharpen its tools of Marxism-Leninism would be tantamount to surrender to the rule of capital. The bourgeoisie try to bamboozle us with words like "democracy, free enterprise, market system". Marx, as comrade J.S. pointed out, spoke of the future state as

"A direct democracy in which the task of governing would not be the preserve of a state bureaucracy..."

and

"an association in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all."

This cannot be taken in the abstract. Marx must have had in his mind a state of affairs where socialism would prevail in the world, or at least in the most highly developed parts of the world. Democracy here was not used in the abstract; it related to that advanced state of humankind where a stage of the administration of things had been reached where, as Engels put it, "there is nothing more to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary."

Marx and Engels did not analyse socialist states living in contradiction and confrontation with hostile capitalist states.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

In dealing with the dictatorship of the proletariat comrade J.S. states that:

"On reflection, the choice of the word 'dictatorship' to describe this type of society certainly opens the way to ambiguities and distortions. The abandonment of the term by most Communist Parties, including ours, does not, in all cases, imply a rejection of the historical validity of its essential content."

The comrade goes on to further infer that because the term has been abused by a number of parties in the past it therefore puts us to shame and we must shy away from what is scientifically correct. He has problems with what he calls the scanty presentation by Marx and Engels of this term.

Let us turn to Lenin who stands out as a distinguished developer of Marxist ideology. Lenin says:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of working people (the petit-bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc), or the majority of these: It is an alliance against capital, an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of any attempt on its part of restoration, an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of socialism."³

Lenin goes on to say that:

"if we translate the Latin, scientific, historical-philosophical term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' it means just the following — only a definite class, namely, the urban workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited in the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new socialist system, in the whole struggle for the complete abolishing of classes."

Lenin makes it very clear that:

"the dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the nucleus against a more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased ten-fold by its overthrow."

Lenin goes on to explain the source of this resistance. He says it is because of the international character of capital.

"...in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie."

Angola, Mozambique, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam illustrate this point.

The saying that the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" has been abused and therefore we must shy away from it sends shivers down our spine. Without accusing comrade J.S. of re-writing Marxism-Leninism, we have seen how not so very long ago many parties of Western Europe, after the end of the Second World War, had high expectations about their path to socialism, but when this was blocked by what Lenin aptly calls the international connections of capitalism, these parties embarked on revisionism. They talked of "structural reforms" where through the ballot box they would restructure everything until we had socialism. They talked of socialism with a human face. Some of them shied away from the clenched fist and resorted to an open hand.

In support of Rosa Luxemburg's call for freedom for those who think differently, comrade J.S. says that:

"Luxemburg's concept of freedom is surely incontrovertible once a society has achieved stability."

This is open to debate. When does society achieve stability? Can we talk of stability when the imperialists are ever destabilising the young socialist states? NATO, SEATO and other hostile blocks of encirclement were not created by the socialist countries but by the 'Great Uncle Sam' who may be a model of democracy and freedom for the bourgeoisie but not for the disenchanted masses of the world. We cannot idealise freedom and democracy. The bourgeoisie only know freedom to make profit, and democracy means commodity exchange.

Lenin talks of numerous non-proletarian strata of working people. In our situation the overwhelming majority of the oppressed consist of these non-proletarian strata. In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels make it very clear that in emancipating itself the working class cannot hope to exploit other classes. *The Road to South African Freedom* states that:

"The main content of this revolution is the national liberation of the African people... for in achieving their liberty the African people will at the same time put an end to all forms of racial discrimination."

"Some 'purists' are horrified that this means replacing white domination by African domination. They little understand that this white domination is based on the ownership of the means of production by whites. What group of Africans can hope to run the Anglo-American Empire or SANLAM? They can only do so in conjunction with the other people of South Africa when these means of production have been taken over by a People's Government.

It is here that the working class has its historic mission. It is here that a party of the working class based on Marxist-Leninist principles must guide the membership. We cannot undermine the vanguard role of the working class in our situation where labour and capital are in constant war.

It is therefore very clear that, where the majority of the people are made up of working men and women, poor peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the middle class, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be abandoned although it frightens the bourgeoisie out of their sleep. In the world where ideological warfare has reached its highest stage we cannot be apologetic about our terminology and our scientific approach to the realities of life.

Bibliography

1. Paul A Baran, *Political Economy of Growth*, 1962.
 2. Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1953.
 3. V.I. Lenin, quoted by Stalin in *Problems of Leninism*, p. 106.
-

Problems of Socialism — 2

Don't Forget the Machinations of Imperialism

by Explo Nani Kofi
— member United Revolutionary Party of Ghana

THE EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE have triggered off a general discussion on the question whether socialism has failed or not. This has attracted contributions from various fraternal parties and activists. Among these contributions is the discussion initiated by comrade Joe Slovo's pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* published in *The African Communist* No 121. Whilst comrade Slovo mentioned the facts of (i) socialist power being first won in the most backward outpost of European capitalism without democratic political tradition

(ii) the years of isolation, economic siege and armed intervention in the immediate post-October period.

The way he introduced his argument thrust the root of the crisis on "the mounting chronicle of crimes and distortions in the history of socialism, its economic failures and the divide between socialism and democracy."

This approach makes it appear as if all that was necessary to avoid the present crisis was the presence of some "holy" leaders who would not have committed the referred-to mounting chronicle of crimes. This to me concentrates on the reflected image rather than on the real object. It is in this area that I find the vacuum filled by the formulation of Tony Monteiro of the CPUSA in the March 1990 issue of *Political Affairs*:

"Socialism in the Soviet Union and in Eastern and Central Europe was built from the ruins of World War I and WW II and under the military, economic, diplomatic and psychological aggression of the Cold War. The Cold War itself extended the anti-socialist content of and was directed at retarding the growth and development of socialism and at eventually destroying it."

He stressed further that "The imperfections in socialism and of socialist democracy are inseparable from the situation."

I add that it is this situation that has forced the countries of Eastern Europe into the crisis situation in which they find themselves. This situation impeded the economic development of these countries, leading to stagnation in comparison to their imperialist counterpart. The people of Eastern Europe rose against the ruling regimes because of the poor economic situation and also because of the measures that had been necessary in order to protect these countries against imperialist aggression. This unfortunately infringed on the freedoms of the individual. We should not let it appear that the people in Eastern Europe are attracted to the West because the leaders in the West are cleaner and "holier" human beings who have not committed the crimes of those in the East.

The importance of the emphasis I am making is further reflected in the address of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, to the Soviet Parliament, printed in *Pravda*, October 24, 1989, where he stressed that one of the main reasons why *perestroika* could not be implemented (or did not evolve) earlier was that "there was no certainty that the Soviet Union was safe from without".

Personalisation

I am quite uncomfortable with Slovo's formulation that "socialism certainly produced a Stalin and a Ceausescu, but it also produced a Lenin and a Gorbachev." I find it difficult to understand what so conveniently places Stalin and Ceausescu together in such a pairing. Whilst there is so much talk about avoiding the repetition of the "personality cult" associated with Stalin's period, many publications of recent times seem to be building another personality cult a la Gorbachev. I think this sort of personalisation plays down and belittles the role of the party and society in these processes. Whatever advancement is attained in the Soviet Union cannot be attributed to a Gorbachev miracle. It will be the product of the efforts of the Soviet people, intra-party interactions, party/outside society relations, the response of the society at large and the leadership initiatives. To my mind, these same forces produce changes in all other situations, not excluding the Soviet Union under Stalin.

It is the same kind of personalisation which has concentrated on "Stalin and his crimes", instead of boldly recognising that the conditions *during* Stalin differ from the period *after* Stalin. This attitude has not given us a solution to the problems but has rather brought the whole concept of socialism into question. The isolation of Stalin as a scapegoat does not provide a convincing supporting argument to prove that Lenin started everything well and that Stalin then destroyed it. Some Soviet historians whose more honest analysis shows that Stalin was committed to Lenin's cause are challenging the whole concept of real socialism as initiated by Lenin. The coining of the terminology "Stalinism" is also entertaining, as everyone has their own definition and even these definitions contradict one another. Some of the attacks on Stalin are just an attempt to look at history with hindsight.

Absolute Faith In Multi-partyism

The publication did not clearly state that some of the communist regimes in fact had multi-party states, as in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. The issue cannot be argued fairly when the historical exit of some type of parties is not shown as a response to the global anti-communist Truman doctrines. Multi-partyism itself is no solution to the problem of undemocratic practice, as reports from multi-party Senegal and Uganda indicate. There cannot be any cut and dried answers of ossification for all situations. Every historic juncture demands answers which respond adequately to the problems of the period. One cannot condemn Uganda

under Museveni with the simple conclusion that it does not run a multi-party system as it is traditionally known in the West. A multi-party system is desirable, but absolutising its superiority for all situations is inappropriate. The first president of Ghana (Dr Kwame Nkrumah) emphasised his preference for a multi-party system as compared to the one-party state, but when forced by specific conditions in Ghana, the nation had to adopt a one-party state in the interests of national unity and security. I therefore prefer the position adopted by the 29-31 March meeting of the SACP and COSATU in Harare published in *The African Communist* No 122:

"...while a one-party system cannot be ruled out in principle — particular conditions may make it necessary — nevertheless in general the multi-party system provides one of the favourable conditions for democratic participation. Yet, second, a multi-party parliamentary political system is not, on its own, sufficient..."

This implies that it is an unpardonable capitulation for revolutionary forces, in the face of events in Eastern Europe, to be fighting for a multi-party system in the abstract, without ensuring the bringing into being of a civil society of institutions, structures and mass independent organisations that can guarantee true and genuine working democracy.

The Struggle Ahead

The post Cold War era does not mean the freezing of class conflicts and class struggle internationally or nationally. Whilst revolutionary forces seem to be lowering their guard, the forces of imperialism are making maximum gains propaganda-wise. When the parties favoured by the West did not win in Bulgaria or in Romania there were claims of irregularities by the western press. But in Czechoslovakia where the West's favourite Civic Forum/Public Against Violence won, reports of manipulation and irregularities were ignored, even though these reports emanated not only from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, but also even from the Christian Democratic Movement.

We cannot in the twinkling of an eye forget the immense sacrifices made by these parties to the developing world and other fraternal parties, despite their own economic difficulties. At this stage of the renewal of various communist parties, there is the need to reciprocate their commitment to proletarian internationalism, to show solidarity with them internationally, and to renew and revive the international communist movement. The SACP and other fraternal parties who have maintained their support base and are still going strong should take an initiative to reconvene an international communist forum.

Left, Right on the Road to the Black Republic

by Nyawuza

(The first part of this article, dealing with the reaction by the Communist Party to the 1928 Comintern resolution on the tasks of the Party in South Africa, was published in the last issue of *The African Communist*, No. 122, Third Quarter 1990.)

The Party Grows

Until the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the Communist Party had gained successes and also committed mistakes. The change of the Party's orientation in 1924 towards recruitment of Africans, mainly people who had recently entered the cities, without skills or qualifications, brought about a huge increase in membership but also new problems.

The Communist Party moved its headquarters from the Trades Hall in July 1927 and opened new offices at 41a Fox Street, an African residential area in Johannesburg. It was at this time that the Party organ, *Umsebenzi* — *The South African Worker*, was reorganised. Besides articles in English it carried articles in African languages, Zulu, Xhosa and Sesotho and had African composers and publishers. According to Edward Roux, the paper became the "first real Communist paper South Africa had seen."³² Many Africans joined the Party with the result that the party membership rose from 200 to 1750, 1600 of whom were Africans. This was the first generation of African communists.³³

One of their first martyrs was Johannes Nkosi. Born on 3 September 1905 Johannes Nkosi worked on white farms and later as a "kitchen boy." At the age of 14 he participated in the 1919 strikes and in 1926 he joined the Communist Party. As a member of a trade union which was affiliated to the African Federation of Trade Unions, he was involved in many strikes and in 1929 he was appointed an organiser for Durban "and from that time never ceased to push forward the cause of Durban workers."³⁴ He was murdered by the police in a demonstration on 16 December 1930. A leaflet drafted by him in Zulu, which was discovered after his death, carried a powerful message and made the call:

"Never under the sun has a nation been so shackled with the chains of slavery. We are not even allowed to voice our opinion on the state of affairs in our motherland. Why not awake and stand on your feet, Africans?... Men, women and young people, we must support the organisations that fight for our freedom."³⁵

Albert Nzula, who had stayed a week with Johannes Nkosi in Durban in preparation for this demonstration, wrote an obituary in *Umsebenzi* on 9 January, 1931. This murder of Nkosi, who was described in *Umsebenzi* as "South Africa's first revolutionary martyr", led one African worker in Durban to compose a poem dedicated to Johannes Nkosi:

The hero we loved, the hero they hated is gone;
Our hero has gone whence travellers never return.
The voice we love, the voice of Johannes Nkosi is untimely silenced.
In his home a place is vacant which never can be filled.

He gave his life for Africa's freedom
His heart was true, humane and tender.
He worked hard for his own class and people
His spirit is with us still and will lead us on to victory.
This is the fighter we love, our hero, comrade Nkosi.

The name of this African son will be on our lips in the struggle.
He was the kind of leader people wanted —
A leader true and faithful to his commission.
He laid down his life that you and I might be freed from the pass law chains of slavery.
Long live the name of our martyr at whose graveside nobody wept.

N.M.M

Such was the calibre of these new recruits who invigorated and rejuvenated the Party which grew quantitatively and qualitatively thus

becoming the *only organisation* in the country whose membership was non-racial.

Cadre Education

In its honest attempts to recruit Africans in large numbers the Party experienced difficulties in connection with the political and ideological education of workers who could neither read nor write. The Party took steps to overcome some of these problems by establishing a Party night-school where the African workers were taught the basics of modern education and the ABC of party politics.

Edward Roux gives us a picture of these problems when he wrote:

"At first many of the new adherents were rather vague as to the nature of CP membership. Asked to prove that they were members of the Party, they would produce a trade union card, or a night school pass."³⁶

The Comintern, basing itself on its experience in India and other colonial countries, had accumulated a lot of knowledge on such issues. It advised the Party to stop recruiting Africans en masse because that diluted Marxism. The Party was advised to remain a small party of professional revolutionaries who work within and with a mass organisation and it should safeguard its independence, advocate the purity of Marxism and lead the struggle for national liberation.

It was stated that the Party must pay particular attention to the ANC. While it remained independent, it must participate in the activities of the ANC and strive to influence and broaden them. The aim should be to transform the ANC into a fighting national-revolutionary organisation which was directed against the white bourgeoisie and British imperialists. It should be based on trade unions, peasant organisations, etc. The Party must systematically develop the hegemony and leadership of the workers in the ANC.³⁷ Writing about this period, Lionel Forman has remarked:

"The Party believed it was necessary to rally the masses on national slogans but under its own banner. Experience had still to teach the vital lesson that it is not *in spite of*, but *in alliance with* [the African National] Congress that the Party would lead the struggle against national oppression."³⁸

The slogan under which the Party was to fight was formulated by the ECCI as: An Independent South African Native Republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full equal rights for all races.

If one considers that the "workers' and peasants' republic" is not the same thing as a "socialist republic", one comes to the inevitable conclusion that the

Comintern had envisaged a "two-stage" revolution before the social one. This did not suggest that there would be a demarcation wall between the "stages" but it did mean there was a need for a patient, cautious and gradual transition which took into account the needs and demands of each "stage" and/or transition to it.

The call for a Black Republic was not directed against the white people or the white workers. On the contrary it was in their interests. The *Negro Worker* had this to say on this question:

"...What can the white workers do about this on the basis of their existing democratic rights?..."

"The Independent Native Republic does not mean a lowering of their standard of living but the raising of the standard of living of the native workers to their level, and then a general improvement in the material and cultural welfare of all the toilers to an extent hitherto unknown by the white workers..."

"The white workers will be liberated from capitalist wage slavery only through the Independent Native Republic... The Independent Native Republic is not only a republic for the native population but a republic for all toilers, whatever the colour of their skin..."

There is also another incorrect idea namely that the Independent Native Republic will give to the native workers only the same political rights as those possessed at present by the white workers in South Africa. The toilers of South Africa will not struggle for such rights given to the workers by the imperialists but for the rights which make them the complete masters of the country. If the matter is not put in this fashion, it means that the white workers would have no reason to struggle for such a republic which would not give them anything more whereas in reality this is not the case at all...²⁹

By posing the issue of the Black Republic the Comintern was also driving home the simple truth that in South Africa class struggle must incorporate the principle of national self-determination of the nationally oppressed people. Practically speaking that meant that in their demands the white workers must include the demands and aspirations of the blacks. Class struggle and national liberation struggle, though not mutually exclusive, are not identical.

What made matters more difficult was that the Communist Party in the late 1920s did not find it easy to differentiate between the two or to understand the dynamic content of the struggle for national liberation, more so that in South Africa class and national struggle were (and still are) inter-related and that the forces for national liberation as represented by the ANC at that time were relatively weak compared with the organised class forces which then comprised mainly the white workers.

There was also the question of the theoretical and ideological legacy of the International Socialist League, from which the Communist Party emerged, whose platform from the very beginning was class struggle and not national liberation struggle. But the fact that these two forces were so intertwined that they seemed inseparable did not remove the fact that organisationally the ANC and the Party ran parallel to one another, although at times they found common ground. History and the struggle had to correct this situation.

After the Sixth Comintern Congress

The field of struggle for the acceptance and implementation of the Black Republic slogan shifted to South Africa itself. At the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of South Africa (26-28 December 1930), where on the rostrum were also seated James Ford and Safarov from the Comintern, there was an attempt to implement the policy of the Comintern within the Party. The subsequent trend of development can be divided into two phases. The first period was between 1929/30 and 1933/34 when the task was to secure the acceptance of the Black Republic slogan. This period coincided with Wolton's attempts to impose his sectarian line. The second phase begins in April 1933 when there developed misunderstandings and quarrels between Bach and Kotane about the interpretation of the Black Republic slogan.⁴⁰ Bach propagated a sectarian position in that he overlooked the different stages of the South African revolution. He said:

*"In these conditions our agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution becomes a component part of the world proletarian revolution."*⁴¹ [My emphasis]

It does not need much theory to recognise that Bach could not be correct in identifying the South African revolution with the world-wise proletarian revolution. The two are inter-connected but not identical.

Kotane, on the other hand, insisted that the original resolution of the Comintern viewed the Black Republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government and that "Bolshevisation" in South Africa must take into consideration the reality in the country. He wrote:

"The Party is too 'Europeanised.' We are simply theoretical and our theory is less connected with practice. Our party members (especially the Whites) are ideologically not South Africans; they are foreigners who know nothing about and are not interested in the country in which they are living at present. They are 'revolutionists' and 'Bolsheviks'...

"But such a conception is just the opposite of Bolshevism. We are living in Africa. The oppressed and exploited people of Africa are without the 150 years of organisational tradition gained by the European working class... The Independent Native Republic ...has different premises, language and attitudes to that of the proletarian dictatorship and the socialist revolution; and it is precisely here where the crux of our argument necessarily revolves. The identification of the two historical stages is nothing but rank opportunism a misconception of our present task...

"The Party must become more Africanised, pay special attention to South Africa, study the conditions in this country and concretise the demands of the toiling masses from first-hand experience. We must speak the language of the native masses and must know their demands.

"Thus while it must not lose its international allegiance, the Party must be 'Bolshevised' — become South African not only theoretically but in reality."⁴²

Kotane uses terms like "Europeanised" and "Africanised" in their geographical meaning to emphasise the different tasks which faced the working class in both continents. The thrust of his argument was that the Party must be "South Africanised" in both theory and practice.

Bach went to Moscow in 1935 to place his case before the Communist International. In this he was unsuccessful.⁴³

He attended and spoke at the 7th Comintern Congress, but afterwards remained in the Soviet Union. In 1937 he was charged with "counter-revolutionary" activity and sentenced to imprisonment in a labour camp in north-east Siberia, where he died on March 10, 1941, supposedly of natural causes. He was posthumously rehabilitated. (See *The African Communist*, No. 119, Fourth Quarter 1989, page 20.)

Roots of Sectarianism

The reason for the emergence of sectarianism within the Party was not merely a clash of personalities. At the Ninth CPSA Congress in 1930 Edward Roux said:

There is now something definitely known as Leninism. We of the CP must assimilate that philosophy otherwise our place is not in the CP and if we study carefully the lines of the development in the Communist International we cannot make those mistakes we have made in the past... It was proved to the Communist International that the leadership of the Party could not assimilate Leninism and therefore the Communist International demanded a new leadership."⁴⁴

If one considers that the Black Republic slogan of the Comintern was based on Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question which were adopted in 1920 at the Second World Congress of the Comintern, "a copy of

which was unfortunately not available to the party in South Africa", it is understandable that such misunderstandings and conflicts arose. But this does not explain the sectarianism of Wolton and Bach, especially in 1931/32, a period which Kotane described as "years of destruction".

A White Front?

The basis for this sectarianism was laid at the Sixth Comintern Congress in Moscow. The Afro-Americans, who had their own problems in the American Party, regarded Bunting's speech, especially his reference to South Africa being a "white man's country", as outrageous. In a slightly different context Jack and Ray Simons confirm:

"The South African party blundered by appointing three white representatives, all opponents of the new line. They seemed to present a 'white front' and aroused a suspicion at the Comintern Congress of being racial chauvinists."⁴⁵

Another contributing factor to the emergence of "left" radicalism in South African politics was the composition of the Anglo-American Secretariat which was in charge of the "Negro Bureau" at the Sixth Congress. Bennet, the leader of this Secretariat, was notorious for his "left" radical views.

These subjective factors, together with the objective necessity of implementing Leninism in the Party, led to this "left" deviation which expressed itself in the denunciation of the Bunting line as a "right wing" deviation. Albert Nzula gave the report at the Ninth Party congress in which he said:

"Comrades, the old leadership has proved itself a complete failure... After two years experience I believe that the whole progress of the Party has been vitiated by old traditions, has been vitiated by right wing and by chauvinist traditions."⁴⁶

Albert Nzula, then Deputy General Secretary of the Party, was expressing current views in the Comintern which were contained in the ECCI statement which served as a basis for discussion at the Ninth Party Congress. The statement observed:

"The Party leaders are committing serious mistakes of a right opportunist character"⁴⁷

This assessment could not be correct because a right wing deviation on the colonial question would mean the rejection of the leading role of the working class (where this was possible); a policy of tailism behind the aspiring bourgeoisie in the colonies and the formulation of reformist solutions. But

what Bunting actually propagated at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern was the rejection of the relevance of the national question and this led to his underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the non-proletarian forces in the anti-colonial revolution — if anything, a left-wing deviation.

This characterisation of the Party line as a “right” deviation led to wrong attitudes and politically unacceptable actions such as the dissolution of the League of African Rights, an organisation of Communists and non-Communists which was initiated by Bunting after his Transkei Campaign of 1929.⁴⁶ What we are saying is that in the strong belief that by rejecting the Black Republic slogan the Party had taken a right-wing deviation and therefore its leadership had to be removed, the Comintern had prepared the ground for the seeds of ultra-left sectarian ideas to germinate. Wolton and Bach were ever ready to water, nurture and cultivate them.

Although the Comintern sent its representatives to South Africa, such as Paul Merker from Germany (1929-32), Eugene Dennis from the USA (1932-33) and George Hardy from Britain (1935-6) the situation in the Party did not improve; on the contrary it worsened. The world-wide depression, drought and the worsening international political climate affected political activities in the country. Party politics became characterised by vindictiveness, accusations and counter-accusations, sterile and personal attacks on Party comrades, and this was done with the support of the Comintern. The Report of the Comintern “before the Seventh World Congress” is a typical example. In it the Party leadership is vilified and Bunting personally attacked and disgracefully slandered, accused of everything including his alleged “chauvinistic, imperialist theory.” This refers to Bunting’s insistence that South Africa is different from other African colonies. Ironically the Black Republic slogan itself was based on the very grounds of acceptance of South African specifics. These and similar accusations, which had very little to do with reality, made it difficult for the Party to advance. Many members were removed from the Party leadership and more were expelled. The Party lost influence. Bitterness and animosity characterised Party life. The main culprits were Wolton and Bach.

If an impression has been created that this period consisted only of divisions, quarrels, factions and “purges”, that has to be corrected. The dominant view in the Party was that the resolution of the Comintern was correct but not the method of its implementation and its interpretation. Edward Roux in the Preface to his political biography of S.P. Bunting, hinted at this when he wrote:

"In fairness to Mrs Bunting I must state that she does not agree with much that I have written both as to the character of her husband and with regard to the Communist International and its role in South Africa"⁵³

Surely Rebecca Bunting who was a veteran of the party and a delegate to the 1922 and 1928 World Congresses of the Comintern, knew the subject matter better than Edward Roux. Although Edward Roux mentioned by name only Mrs. Bunting as a person who disagreed with him about the contents of his book, he concedes in the same Preface that "some Party members and sympathisers" thought the book would do them harm, and elsewhere he wrote of the "vehemence of the protests",⁵⁴ suggesting the sharpness of the criticisms which came from many people.

United Front

The new orientation towards a popular and united front which was adopted at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in 1935 had a positive influence on the Party.⁵⁵ Many members who were expelled were rehabilitated, a new Central Committee was elected with W.H. Andrews as Chairman and Moses Kotane as General Secretary. The old wounds started to heal as the Party was learning from its history and mistakes that good intentions remain a subjective affair but the way in which they are made a reality can have repercussions and scars which cannot be healed by explanations. The struggle had to continue.

These problems which faced the Party, though they were local in form and South African in appearance, had an intrinsically and essentially universal character. As early as 1907, basing himself on Russian experience, Lenin wrote:

"Our Party's serious illness is the growing pains of a mass party. For there can be no mass party, no party of a class, without full clarity of essential shadings without an open struggle between various tendencies, without informing the *masses* as to which leaders and which organisations of the Party are pursuing this or that line. Without this, a party worthy of the name cannot be built, and we are building it....

"Personal bitterness, factional squabbles and strife, scandals and splits — all these are trivial in comparison with the fact that the experience of two tactics is actually teaching us a lesson to everyone who is capable of taking an intelligent interest in politics. Our squabbles and splits will be forgotten. Our tactical principles, sharpened and tempered will go down as cornerstones in the history of the working class movement and socialism in Russia."⁵⁶

This is of great theoretical and practical-political significance in evaluating and assessing the history of the South African liberation

movement. We must treasure the positive aspects of the past without forgetting the negative and irrelevant features. It was in this spirit that the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party in wrote December 1972:

"The SACP is a pioneer of the idea that the main content of our struggle is the liberation of the African people and with them the other oppressed nationalities. As early as the twenties communists were the first to give expression to it by the adoption of the slogan of "Independent Black Republic."

References

31. *Die Beschlüsse des 5 Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationales*, Berlin 1928 pp. 145-146.
32. Roux, E., *S.P. Bunting. A Political Biography*, Cape Town 1944.
33. cf Bunting, B., *Moses Kotane. South African Revolutionary*, London 1975.
34. *Umsebenzi*, January 9, 1931.
35. Ibid.
36. Roux, E., *S.P. Bunting...* op cit.
37. Tätigkeitsbericht des EKKI, Resolution zur Südafrikanischen Frage, in: *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, H.5 1928.
38. Forman, L., "Background to the National Question in South Africa" in: Forman Papers.
39. *The Negro Worker*, Vol. 5 No 1, January 1935 p. 15.
40. Letter: Back to the PB of the CP of South Africa, July 6 1934.
41. Ibid.
42. Lerumo, A., *Fifty Fighting Years...* London 1971.
43. Ibid.
44. Report on the Ninth Annual Conference of the Communist Party of South Africa, Johannesburg, December 26-28, 1930.
45. Simons, H.J. and R.E., *Class and Colour...* op. cit.
47. A letter from the Executive of the Communist International in: *Umsebenzi*, February 12, 1930.
48. cf Bunting, B., *Moses Kotane...* op cit.
49. *Die Kommunistische Internationale vor dem VII Weltkongresse.. Materialien*. Moskau-Leningrad 1935 p. 625.
50. Bunting, S.P., Statement on the ECCI Resolution, August 22, 1928.
51. Hutt, W.H., *The Economics of Colour Bar*, London 1964 p. 68.
52. Letter: D.I. Jones to W H. Andrews April 13, 1924.
53. Roux, E., *S.P. Bunting. A Political Biography...* op. cit.
54. Letter: Edward Roux to Brian Bunting, June 6, 1943.
55. *The African Communist*, No 52 1973 p. 25.
56. Lenin, V.I., *Collected Works*, Vol. 13 1964 p. 159.



AFRICA

NOTES & COMMENT

by Jabulani Mkhathshwa

ANGOLA: THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

IMMEDIATELY AFTER INDEPENDENCE WAS WON in 1975, at a time when the Angolan people were engaging in the struggle for national reconstruction, UNITA, which had already served the interests of the Portuguese colonial government during the armed struggle for national independence, directly allied itself with the racist South African regime, becoming its instrument of destabilisation, massacres, theft and plunder, with a view to hindering the fulfilment of the Angolan people's aspirations.

In addition, the young People's Republic had to mount an unparalleled defence by an independent African country against the intervention of foreign armies, including South Africa's mercenaries of various nationalities fighting in support of UNITA and FNLA.

It is against the background of this experience that the People's Republic of Angola determined the level and extent of democracy practised within the country. Those who have accused the Angolan government of failing to conduct elections and to allow the free participation of other political parties and organisations in shaping the country's constitutional future never balanced their judgements by taking this reality into consideration.

The fact that Angola proceeded to support the Namibian liberation struggle meant that it had to postpone even further the creation of favourable conditions for the establishment of full democracy, because in conditions of war it is almost impossible to go about civil affairs as though it were peace time.

Angola's acceptance and adoption of a one-party political system thus stemmed from concrete historical causes rather than a commitment to theoretical principles. Yet the various US administrations used this as one of the pretexts for isolating the country and for funding UNITA. No similar attitude was adopted towards countries like Kenya, which also had a one-party political system but maintained a clientist relationship with the world capitalist system.

Within the framework of a new political situation that was ushered in by Namibia's independence, the MPLA Workers' Party has, for the first time, given full thought and practical consideration to the building of democracy in the country.

It was first stated by President Jose Eduardo dos Santos during an interview with an Egyptian television journalist on June 3, 1990, when he alluded to the discussion of the draft constitution and the party's attitude to the multi-party political system. The Angolans will, in time, move to such a system, he said, but "we do not think it recommendable to move suddenly... to a multi-party system without going through various stages."

This view was endorsed in a thesis presented to the 3rd Congress of the MPLA Workers' Party, which stated that the party "recognises that under objective conditions of internal peace and security... the current political system could realistically evolve into a multi-party political system in keeping with history, realities in our country and the natural evolution of society."

The Nature of the Party

Under the newly developing political circumstances (both international and national), the MPLA Workers' Party has had to define itself. In its current statutes, adopted at the 3rd Party Congress, it is self-defined as a vanguard party of the working class which unites in a solid alliance the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and other working people dedicated to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat.

The Party's 3rd Congress, however, reviewed several former positions and accepted the possible membership of believers, small proprietors and other citizens involved in individual or family economic activity who may have a labour force dependent on them, fairly paid in accordance with the law and necessary for the activity concerned.

The MPLA Workers' Party would in this way be the political vanguard of all the working people, whose short-term goal is to struggle for the consolidation of the nation, for democracy, progress and social justice.

This vanguard status would be affirmed through the meritorious attitude and conduct of its members in fulfilling their party, patriotic, civic and occupational duties, and it would at the same time be an instrument of action, transformation and activity, with the cooperation of all patriotic strata of society. Meanwhile, within the context of broadening the Party's social base, mechanisms are to be created to increase the representation of the peasants, who are the majority of the Angolan population.

The MPLA Workers' Party would thus guide the state and society without interfering directly in the administration of the state or enterprises, through its members' exemplary work, moral strength, political work and work of persuasion. In carrying out its role of guiding the state, the party would pay special attention to replacing administrative and bureaucratic methods with political and economic ones.

The broadening of democracy and the perfecting of the political system means making certain adjustments in the organs of sovereignty, with a view to a greater delimitation of legislative, executive and judicial powers at all levels, in the context of a constitutional review and the prospect of creating a democratic constitutional state.

The MPLA Workers' Party envisages the following measures, among others:

- Improving the principles, methods and mechanisms of the electoral system, so as to guarantee broad participation by all citizens in the representative state organs, and reviewing the electoral law to this end.
- Up-dating the Nationality Law.
- In the light of the current realities, adjusting the attributions, competencies and composition of the People's Assembly (parliament), as a basic instrument of state that represents the Angolan people and nation, such that more non-Party members can be represented in the People's Assembly.
- Carrying out administrative reform based on scientific principles and realistic action.
- Creating the post of Prime Minister, as an individual fully and exclusively concerned with directing the day-to-day work of the Council of Ministers, to be appointed by and answerable to the President of the Republic and accountable to the People's Assembly.
- Separating the posts of President of the Republic and President of the People's Assembly, on the one hand, and those of Provincial Commissioner and President of the Provincial People's Assembly on the other.

- Heightening the role and independence of the courts and perfecting the unified system of justice, in which the legal principles and norms approved, govern and guide state organisation and the relationship between state organs, as well as the relationship between them and citizens.
 - Creating efficient mechanisms to control the constitutional nature of acts by state organs.
 - Limiting elected posts at provincial level to two consecutive terms of office and at Central Committee level to less than three.
 - Enshrining freedom of the press and its legal limits.
 - Dedicating a law to the autonomy and freedom of action of social and mass organisations and social and professional associations and gradually eliminating the excessive zeal of Party organs and the tendency to confuse social and mass organisations with Party bodies.
-

KENYA: DEMAND FOR A NEW BEGINNING AND A NEW DIRECTION

THE RECENT MASS CAMPAIGN OF DEFIANCE all over Kenya involving various social forces — ranging from peasants, workers, the unemployed to clerics, lawyers and a large section of the business community — is an expression of a growing political impasse in the country. According to a statement released recently by MWAKENYA,

“the party and the leadership to which Kenyans had entrusted their power, their money, their resources, their labour and their hopes have betrayed that trust and completely failed us in the last twenty-five years. Instead of building, they have systematically dismantled; instead of planting for a future harvest, they have literally eaten up the very seeds; instead of inspiring our youth, they have sought to demoralise them; instead of healing minor differences, they have tried to bring about needless communal divisions; instead of nurturing life, they have killed: Garissa in 1980, Wajir and Pokot massacres in 1984, Nairobi University in 1985; Muoroto in 1990, and now the on-going government atrocities that started with the assault on the pro-democracy rally of Saturday 7th July 1990. Government organised thuggery and death squads à la Latin America are now routine in Kenya. Altogether there has been over six thousands killed by government agents since Moi came to power in 1978”.

In order to thwart the growth of a united opposition movement, President Moi's government tried to divide Kenyan people on the basis of religion and regions of origin. Fortunately in these decades Kenyans have learnt that they are one nation with a common history of struggle and a common future.

Demands For Thoroughgoing Changes

Thus everywhere across the Republic today the overwhelming majority of Kenyans are united in talking openly and loudly about the high price of basic necessities, the high unemployment, police harassment and brutality, corruption in all national affairs, landlessness and the impoverishment of the vast majority.

They are united in their expressed support for demands for thoroughgoing changes in government, in parliament, in the entire political process. They want changes in the commercial, farming, housing and employment policies.

They want changes in the judiciary, in the education system and in such other services as health, transport and other spheres that affect their daily lives including their personal security.

In its analysis MWAKENYA maintains that this is a period similar to the 1960s when again, united and unfearing, the Kenyans came together to fight for total independence. Then, as now, some opposed the demand and helped the colonial government. President Moi and his party KADU supported British rule. Moi, for instance, is on record as having said that Kenya was not yet ready for independence.

According to MWAKENYA, by 1966 the 1962 KANU platform that Kenyans voted to power and the independence constitution had become so subverted and abused that as they stand today "they are almost a complete negation of our original expectations". By the nineties Moi had completely succeeded in turning KANU into an instrument of personal rule.

Quite naturally the call for President Moi and KANU to go has expressed itself in terms of a countrywide demand for a multi-party system. But the issues at hand are far broader than the question of just one or several parties. They have to do with the entire economic and political system. What the people want is no less than a new beginning and a new direction in all aspects of the national life.

President Moi has responded to this countrywide demand by unleashing the State forces against the thousands of demonstrators who were only exercising their democratic right of free assembly. As the demonstrations spread across the whole country, the killings by the armed forces increased daily.

The killings which have been mounting since the assault on the pro-democracy rally at Kamukunji in Nairobi on Saturday July 7, 1990, by para-military forces were Moi's typical way of responding to mass pressure. According to MWAKENYA, they pointed even more to the urgency and necessity of keeping up the pressure for democracy. In pursuit of that goal, MWAKENYA has put forward the following proposals:

- (a) There must be a new constitution,
- (b) There must be checks and balances on the presidency,
- (c) Free multi-party elections must be held,
- (d) All acts that discriminate against any Kenyan nationalities must go.

THE MEANING OF HISTORY

History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and 'subtle' than the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced class imagine.

This is understandable because the best vanguards express the class consciousness, the will, the passion, the fantasy of tens of thousands, while the revolution is made, at the moment of its climax and the exertion of all human capabilities, by the class consciousness, the will, the passion and the fantasy of tens of millions who are urged on by the very acutest class struggle.

V.I. Lenin, *"Left Wing" Communism*, 1920.

The ICU reaches its peak – and begins to break up

by Theresa Zania

AS I INDICATED in an earlier article¹, Kadalie's ICU, centred in Cape Town, evidenced in the period 1921 to 1923, after the break-up of the embryonic nation-wide organisation under the leadership of the ANC leader Selby Msimang, a definite tendency to localism. Despite this, it is clear that, even in this period, the ICU leaders did not completely lose its orientation as an African mass national organisation. In this respect, Garveyites who came into the leadership from 1920 and, in general, the influence of the black nationalist ideology of Garveyism no doubt played a certain role².

However, the ICU's African national trust had, in fact, a great deal to do with Kadalie himself. His experience in his own country Nyasaland (today Malawi) had clearly marked his psychology and political understanding. Nyasaland had, in the pre-war and war years, been host to a series of anti-colonialist movements of one type or another, culminating in the well-known Chilembwe Rising of early 1915. Moreover, Kadalie's tribe, the Tonga, had distinguished itself by its opposition to the recruiting activities of the mining industry, centred in Rhodesia and South Africa.³

Kadalie's political-ideological development had, too, a lot to do with his dynamic personality. He thought and acted big, and was simply not attuned to parochialism. This was reflected early on in the ICU's drive not only to build a South African-, and, indeed, Southern African-wide, organisation, but also to establish international links. Already in the ICU's first years Kadalie had written to the Profintern, based in Moscow⁴, and his concern

with international relations was carried forward into the years when the ICU was at its height.

This broader approach distinguished Kadalie from the more orthodox Garveyites and from other types of narrow nationalists.

Indeed, the fact that Kadalie was an outsider on the South African scene may have contributed to his global-oriented radicalism which prevented him from contributing as much as he might have done to the building of an all-African front in South Africa and in particular from seeking closer co-operation with the ANC. At the same time the very fact that Kadalie — a non-South African who could speak none of the country's African languages — actually became a leader of the ICU indicated that the objective conditions for a fully-fledged national liberation movement had not yet matured in South Africa at that time.

Link with Eastern Cape

Another important factor in the ICU's development was its link with the eastern Cape. Though there was also a Coloured and Indian community, the black population of the eastern Cape was overwhelmingly African and was in this respect different from the western Cape which, despite the growing influx of Africans in the 1920's, had still an essentially Coloured physiognomy. Moreover, the eastern Cape, more so than the western Cape, was tied in to the rest of country by the fact that the Ciskei and Transkei were the chief recruiting grounds within South Africa for the labour requirements of the mine magnates of the Witwatersrand.

The western Cape/eastern Cape ICU axis had come about as a result of Kadalie's link with Samuel Masabalala, the fiery ANC demagogue from Port Elizabeth. Masabalala had first struck the headlines of South Africa's newspapers at the time of the "Port Elizabeth massacre" of October 1920. He had originally been in the Selby-Msimang-headed ICWU but, in the aftermath of the latter's July 1921 conference, had joined Kadalie, evidently because he had been annoyed by the manner in which the moderate Selby Msimang had intervened in the Port Elizabeth confrontation. He had also been irritated by Msimang's comments in his presidential address at the 1921 conference about the strike proclivities of people who "were ignorant of the doctrines of trade unionism" and his warning against "wild talk" which Masabalala naturally saw as directed in the main against himself⁵. In fact, Msimang had already, in the course of that year, begun to be affected by imperialist-influenced reformism. By 1924-25 he had, together with Selope Thema, another leading figure in the ANC, formed a close relationship with

the various instruments of the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg, amongst others the Joint Council.

Despite the contradictory nature of the ICU's development in the years 1921 to 1923, which was reflected *inter alia* in its 1923 annual conference held in January in Cape Town, the delegates even at that conference conceived of the historical role of their organisation in essentially African national terms⁷. It was, indeed, this African nationalist orientation which was an important motor for the growth of the ICU into a nation-wide organisation. At its 1923 conference Kadalie made the proposal that the ICU should carry out a propaganda campaign throughout the whole country and, as a key step, should extend organisation to the Transvaal province, with the aim in particular of organising the mineworkers there. Up to this time, in addition to the western and eastern Cape, the ICU had a foothold in South West Africa and was geared essentially to the interests of the railway and harbour workers (though its 1923 conference indicated also a growing concern with the appalling conditions of the farm workers).

At the ICU's 1924 conference (January, East London) a resolution was passed that "an Officer or Officers be dispatched to tour the Union including the various Protectorates⁸ and Rhodesia immediately for the purpose of organising African Mine workers and Labour in general."⁹

Meanwhile, the opening up of the rest of the country had begun. In the second half of 1923 Kadalie travelled to the Orange Free State and established an ICU branch in Selby Msimang's former stronghold of Bloemfontein. In the first half of 1924 the ICU, together with the other black organisations of the country, was concentrating its attention on the general election which was in the offing. It was in the election's aftermath, apparently, indeed, with the financial assistance of Hertzog's Nationalist Party which the ICU leaders had supported in the election, that Kadalie continued with his task of propagating the message of the ICU in the northern provinces. He travelled to Durban in order to establish the ICU in the Natal province. After facing considerable problems, stemming both from the English-speaking authorities as well as from sections of the Zulu people, he was eventually able to set up a branch, with the assistance of the Pietermaritzburg-based ANC leader, Josiah Gumede, who was to play such an outstanding role in the 1920's.

Thereafter, Kadalie's aim was to introduce himself to "the golden city" of Johannesburg where he arrived in September 1924. As it happened, an ICU branch had already been established there in the first half of that year by members of the Young Communist League, Stanley Silwana, Thomas Mbeki

and Nimrod Tantsi, with the assistance of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League leaders, Edward Roux and Willie Kalk.¹⁰ In the course of 1925 Kadalie began to centre his activities on the Rand.

The ICU develops into a 'Congress' organisation

The years 1924-25 marked a new stage in the development of the ICU. By 1924 it had become clear that it had begun to shift from its trade union basis and develop into a Congress-type organisation, in the sense of Thomas Hodgkin's conception, namely "a loosely knit, even amorphous, amalgam of local and functional organisations, grouped around a nuclear executive or working committee".¹¹ The Congress tendency was reflected in the approach of the ICU leaders to its 1924 conference, to which were invited "every Labour Union in South Africa, skilled or unskilled, in short, from brain workers to the man and woman who work with his or her hands", "all organisations interested in the social and economic uplift of the race"¹². Marking the new development of the organisation, the ICU's 1924 conference was referred to as the "first African Labour Congress"¹³. Characteristic of the ICU at this time is that it saw itself as representing *all* Africans — in their capacity as working people.

The "Congress" tendency of the ICU was reflected in its urge to draw in all organisations interested in "social" questions with the aim of creating and consolidating a nation-wide front organisation. ICU units arose not, in the first place, on an industrial or factory basis, but regionally according to villages and towns. Moreover, the concept of a "federation" which emerged at this time began to take on an ever more pronounced provincial profile, similar to the ANC, and the provincial secretaries became key men in the organisation¹⁴. This development, in fact, was soon to create the conditions for a clash between Kadalie and the ICU leader James La Guma, who was to join the Communist Party in the second half of 1925. The Communists opposed the "Congress"-type "amorphous" and omnibus structure of the ICU. In general terms, their influence was directed to tightening up the organisational structure, streamlining and democratising it, countering its regional tendency and consolidating its working class basis. At the political-ideological level this went together with the attempt to counter the nationalist tendency in the ICU. Amongst other things, the Communists had deep reservations about the ANC leaders' aristocratic background and inclinations. All these factors served, at least for a temporary period, to consolidate the gap between the ANC and the ICU.¹⁵

The "Congress"-type character of the ICU was an objectively determined factor, as indeed it was with the ANC. It reflected the *colonialist* form of domination, the national and social composition of the African people and their level of political consciousness. Crucial was the "relatively undeveloped state of the class contradiction peculiar to capitalist society" — to quote Lenin in relation to the situation in Russia at the time of the 1905 revolution, when the struggle for elementary demands and "liberty" united the whole people, irrespective of class.¹⁶ In fact, Congress-type organisation was essentially what Lenin denoted as "non-party organisation", in the sense that a Congress does not represent a particular class or even an alliance of classes or social fractions, but "the whole people".

The ICU's anti-capitalist orientation

The question arises as to how the anti-capitalist thrust of the ICU fits in with our description of it as essentially a Congress-type "non-class" African nationalist organisation. In fact, the ICU's anti-capitalist positions were of the "non-capitalist" rather than strictly socialist variety. The ICU emerged as a nation-wide organisation in conditions where a capitalist South African national state was in the process of being formed, and although in colonialist conditions non-capitalist political/ideological positions can have a socialist potential, in fact the anti-capitalism of the ICU leaders had a rhetorical and utopian element. This was expressed in an anarchist form. In the period 1927-28, when a wave of evictions of labour tenants and squatters engendered a rural revolt, the ICU's reaction took a typically petit-bourgeois utopian socialist form — at least at the level of the ICU's centre "Kadalie leadership".¹⁸

Kadalie's view was that the land belonged to all and should not be divided on the basis of private ownership. The fact that the ICU was later diverted into land-buying schemes reflected the unfavourable conditions for "revolutionary" solutions rather than Kadalie's own predilections.

The anti-capitalist positions of the ICU leaders were closely connected with the widening and deepening of colonialist relations which gathered impetus in the 1920's, placing artisans, craftsmen, small business people and other more typically petit-bourgeois sections of the African people under growing pressure. Many were threatened with the prospect of being pushed down into the ranks of the proletarian masses and the urban poor of the shanty towns which were beginning to mushroom on the outskirts of the towns and villages. At the ICU's annual conference of 1925 (Johannesburg, April) Kadalie proclaimed a socialist goal for the organisation. That some of

his detailed conceptions, for example alliance with the white workers, reflected the influence of the Communist Party, should not mislead us as to the essentially African nationalist orientation of the Kadalie-leadership. He said:

"We are aiming at the building up in Africa of a National Labour Organisation of the aboriginals, through which we shall break the wills of white autocracy. We must prevent the exploitation of our people on the mines and on the farms, and obtain increased wages for them. We shall not rest there. We will open the gates of the Houses of legislation, now under the control of white oligarchy, and from this step we shall claim equality of purpose with the white workers of the world to overthrow the capitalist system of Government and usher in a co-operative Commonwealth one, a system of Government which is not foreign to the aboriginal of Africa."¹⁹

It was this anti-capitalist tendency which determined that, even in its earliest days, the ICU found its home amongst the Communists and labour movements of Cape Town and took up a position in opposition to Smuts's party, the South African Party, which was at the time the party representing the interests of imperialism and capitalism. Once the ICU had come to Johannesburg, centre of the gold-mining industry, it was inevitable that it should direct its main blows against the Chamber of Mines and in particular against the political arms of the Chamber in the form of the Joint Council, the Bantu Men's Social Centre and the Chamber's newspaper directed to blacks, *Umteteli wa Bantu*. As it happened, these were the very organs with which some prominent ANC figures such as Selby Msimang and Selope Thema had become connected. In the issue of the ICU newspaper of 9 January 1925 appeared the comment:

"We refer to Johannesburg as being notorious because it is there where the English capitalists have succeeded to capture men of the African race — men with intellectual ability — to preach the gospel of co-operation between white exploiters and the exploited blacks. We may just as well make ourselves understood that we would welcome co-operation between white wage-earners and black wage-earners, but not to be used as tools to encourage the English capitalists, who, for 200 years under camouflage and hypocrisy, have sucked the blood of the African workers, to prevent our onward march for emancipation. Let the African workers be not deceived, nothing tangible could come out from the 'Joint Councils of Europeans and Natives'. An exploited race has not to look to the exploiter for emancipation from the shackles of slavery."

ANC-ICU Relationship

Already in 1923, at a time when the ICU was still essentially a Cape organisation, Kadalie had returned to the question of the distinction

between the ICU and the ANC. In an introduction to the report of the proceedings of the 1923 conference, he wrote:

"If this great industrial Organisation now launched can survive, we must register in our minds that we give not to any set of men or women, no matter how capable they may be, the power to control the policy of our Organisations, which must for all time rest with the units of the movement."

With the ANC clearly in mind, he continued:

"We have observed in this country how many organisations amongst our people have either been blotted out of existence or are still weak, as in their infancy, on the ground that its leaders usurped the power bestowed on them by the people they had led on or are leading."²⁰

In this period there was in fact not yet a pressing need to sort out the respective roles of the two organisations. In the western Cape the ANC appeared as just one of several black political organisations and the ICU was itself not a national organisation. However, once the ICU had entered the northern provinces and in particular had reached the Rand which was the traditional hunting-ground of the ANC, the ICU was under pressure to clarify its relationship with the traditional leader of the "African nation". So it was that already in the first half of 1925 a leading article in the ICU newspaper noted that, while the ICU was the "labour" organisation of the African people, the ANC was "the only political body we recognise"²¹.

The extension of colonialist domination which marked the years 1923 to 1925 served to lay the basis for a strengthening of the African nationalist orientation of the ANC itself and this, in its turn, brought about more favourable circumstances for ANC-ICU co-operation. Thus, for instance, the ANC called for a boycott of the visit of the representative of the British royal family, the Prince of Wales, to South Africa during 1925. However, it was Hertzog's announcement in November 1925 of a series of measures which, he held, would constitute a final solution of the "Native Question" and which included the removal of the Cape African franchise, that was to produce a dramatic response on the African political scene and create particularly favourable conditions for common action on the part of the ANC and the ICU. The prospect even emerged for an organisational link-up between the two organisations which would have meant finally the realisation of the dreams of the original founders of the nation-wide Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa who had wished to see their organisation become the "industrial wing" of the ANC.

Hertzog's proposals, to be embodied in a set of bills to be placed before parliament, were to carry into effect the so-called policy of "segregation". Africans would be allowed, it was claimed, to "develop along their own lines" in their "own areas". In place of the Cape African franchise, Africans would be represented by seven whites in the House of Assembly and there would be established an advisory "Union Native Council" with some members elected by the Africans. "Native Councils" would be set up in the "Native Areas" to deal with local questions.

As a sop for such radically discriminatory measures, Hertzog stated that Africans would be placed in a position to acquire the further land which had been promised them under the Land Act of 1913 — a meaningless "concession" which did not change the basic fact that Africans were to be excluded from buying or occupying land in 87% of the land area of the country.

The hopes entertained by some African leaders, including the leaders of the ICU, that Hertzog's "segregation" policy might work out favourably for the African people were dashed. Hertzog's declaration, together with other signals earlier in 1925, such as the new government's attempt to re-impose passes on African women in the Transvaal, began to make clear that the Nationalist-Labour Pact government had little intention of taking steps to do away with the "slave labour system".

The threat to abolish the Cape African franchise roused the African leaders as never before, for it removed that fundamental hope which had existed since the time of "Union" (1910) that the existence of the Cape vote would serve as a basis for the gradual extension of African political rights on an equal basis with the whites.

As it was a typically political issue it was the ANC which was to head action against the new proposals, but nevertheless certain tensions developed between the two organisations.

Despite the ICU leaders' designation of the role of their organisation as an "industrial" one while the ANC was the "political" organisation of the African people, it was difficult in practice to determine what was a purely industrial, or more widely a social, issue and what a political one. This problem had already arisen earlier in the year in connection with the government's threat to introduce passes for African women. Were passes an industrial or a political issue? Although the pass system had a legislative basis, it was a means, above all, of maintaining a cheap labour system. Moreover, passes were increasingly being used to restrict the activities of ICU organisers. On the other hand, the ANC had already staked its claim on the question of passes in the course of the mass upsurge of 1917 to 1920.

It had finally decided to leave the question of the women's passes to the ANC which, instead of organising a mass campaign in which the ICU could have played a role, took the issue to the courts where, as it happened, it won²².

The all-In African Convention

Clearly, then, the relationship between the two organisations was a problematic one and certain tensions between them were not to be avoided. These tensions were increased by the different styles of their politics, the one correct and somewhat aristocratic, the other radical and even demagogic. Moreover, the "young bloods" of the ICU were ambitious, full of energy, and the rather distant and patronising stance of the "fathers" of the ANC was enormously frustrating. Nonetheless, the outlook at the end of 1925, in the aftermath of Hertzog's declaration, seemed favourable for closer co-operation between the ANC and the ICU. Apart from anything else, this had to do with the fact that the Rev. Z.R. Mahabane, former leader of the Cape Congress who had known the ICU from its earliest years, was to head the campaign. He had in 1924 taken over the presidency of the national ANC from the conservative S.M. Makgatho, who was distinctly hostile to the ICU and who had even opposed the ICU's advent on the Rand²³. Mahabane clearly had the mass of the African working people in mind in his carefully worded and dignified call to "our Paramount and other Chiefs ruling the great Territories of the Transkei, Zululand, Swaziland, Sekukuniland, Bechuanaland, etc. to take into your serious consideration the question of the advisability and expediency of meeting with other representatives of the race in a National Convention"²⁴. It is likely that Mahabane had been in touch with the ICU leaders concerning the building of African unity.

The All-African Convention which met on New Year's day, 1926, in Bloemfontein made some important demands. It reaffirmed the Bill of Rights adopted by the ANC in 1923²⁵; it rejected segregation, demanded unrestricted ownership of land by Africans in the land of their birth, equality before the law and equal citizenship; it claimed that there existed a 'legal and moral right' for the extension of the formula of Cecil Rhodes of 'Equal rights for every civilised man south of the Zambesi'; it demanded these equal rights in a fully unified South Africa with direct representation by members of their own race in all the legislative bodies of the country, 'otherwise there can be no taxation without representation'. Instead of the removal of the Cape African franchise, it urged its extension to the northern provinces. It rejected all segregationist and discriminatory instruments such as the proposed council system. It suggested a round-table conference of 'an equal number of

representatives of the Union Government and the African National Congress as well as other non-European organisations' at an early date.

This statesmanlike response to the Hertzog proposals confirmed the ANC's role as the leading organisation of the African people. The demands had an essentially bourgeois-democratic thrust, with civil rights as the key issue. Working class demands, even of an essentially bourgeois-democratic type, were not mentioned, nor social issues in general. This was certainly not unrelated to the fact that the working people's movement in the country, centred on the Communist Party and the ICU, had itself not yet formulated in a consistent and popular manner a campaign programme reflecting the democratic demands of the working people. The strategic aim was seen to be socialism. In such a situation it was hard to find a common denominator which would serve to bring together the various sectors of the progressive movement of the country. At the Convention the ICU leaders, with their radical social thrust, had great difficulty in making their influence felt. And they came away disappointed.

Putting New Life Into Congress

In a report-back meeting on 10 January in Johannesburg, Kadalie held that the ICU had gone to Bloemfontein "to put new life into the Congress". He noted that the presence on the Convention's platform of whites who had no sympathy whatever with the black man, and the "overrunning" of the conference by ministers, many of whom were "compromisers", had been unsatisfactory features of the meeting²⁶. In April, in his report to the ICU's annual conference, Kadalie said, in relation to the role of the ICU delegates to the Convention:

"It was a new departure to mix up the organisation with a distinct old political school, but the circumstances which necessitated this departure were so forceful. The proletarian delegates 'gingered up' the old political thoughts at Bloemfontein into action..."²⁷

Nonetheless, the ICU did not completely write off the ANC-organised gathering. The issue of the ICU newspaper of 20 February 1926 endorsed "wholeheartedly the Bill of Rights as reaffirmed at the recent Bloemfontein Convention"²⁸. Moreover, the ICU leaders were evidently hoping that, in the Convention's aftermath, the ANC would initiate a campaign of passive resistance which would include withdrawal of labour. Here it was hoped the ICU would be able to make its imprint, for did it not have at its disposal the "ready weapon to withhold our labour from the market"?²⁹ They advised the

African "political leaders" to "study closely the Gandhian methods of passive resistance"³⁰.

However, the ANC decision to conduct a nation-wide agitation against the Hertzog proposals did not materialise³¹. This was no doubt connected with the fact that the removal of the franchise and the other measures had only been put forward as an intention by Hertzog and had not yet even been framed as bills. Moreover, once the bills had been drawn up and introduced into parliament, there was to follow the long process within parliament itself. In fact, the Cape African franchise was not finally removed until 1936 when a bill was finally pushed through parliament by means of the co-operation of the two leading white political parties, a co-operation which had failed to materialise in the 1920's on this issue.

There was yet another prospect, arising out of the Convention, upon which the Kadalie leadership laid considerable weight. This was the decision — it had probably originated with the ICU leaders and been supported by some of the ANC's more left-orientated personalities — to create a central body on which would sit representatives from all other African societies and organisations. An editorial in the *Worker's Herald* under the heading "The Dawn of African Revolution" urged the formation of this "National Assembly":

"This must take place in the form of a political alliance to which all the existing organisations of the African people must be affiliated..."³²

Though the editorial noted that the ICU did not intend to discuss at that stage the actual form the "National Assembly" would take — that would be left until the leaders met — it becomes immediately apparent that the ICU leaders concerned with the project³³ essentially conceived of a sort of enlarged "Congress"-type organisation which would emerge through unity, above all, of the ANC and the ICU. The editorial ended with a dramatic flourish:

"NO The immediate consequences of any attempt to crush the African proletariat at this juncture, must be a resolute determination on the part of the people so affected to link their forces together, thereby to bring about the dawn of political revolution in this country. We must have a real NATIONAL ASSEMBLY To your tents, O African proletariat!"

The "National Assembly" was not to materialise. An editorial in the ICU newspaper on 27 March 1926 noted that "our political leaders" had made no response to the suggestion for the creation of a "political National Assembly":

"We are confident that they will make no move at all because they have no courage".

Conclusion

The failure of the ICU to link up with the ANC at this time really signalled the not distant demise of the ICU; for having failed to achieve what would have in effect been a first step towards incorporation within the folds of the "mother body", such a radically-oriented organisation had little chance of surviving in the unfavourable conditions of the late 20's and the 30's. And when the African mass movement began again to develop in the 40's and 50's, the mass tendency found its place, of course, not in a separate organisation but within the ANC itself.

The vision of the emergence of what would have been a mass African nationalist organisation of a "Congress-type" was linked, in the mind of the ICU leaders, with a conception of a national liberation war. Thus in the leading article of 20 February 1926, under the heading "The Dawn of African Revolution", from which I have already quoted, was the following passage:

"The Bloemfontein convention... indicates that political war between the privileged few and those who have been cynically robbed in the land of their forefathers is inevitable. We prophesy that our country shall become a second Ireland where African patriots and martyrs shall continually unfurl the banner of freedom..."

As we know, it was only in the early 60's, after the strengthening of the mass movement in the 40's and 50's, that the national liberation movement was able to begin to put such a conception into practice.

Having been rejected by the ANC, the ICU leaders began in the course of 1926 to turn increasingly for succour to the international working class movement, in particular the British labour movement. In the period 1925-26, the latter had apparently shifted to the left, *inter alia* in regard to the colonial question³⁴. During 1926, moreover, the great British strike, led by the courageous miners, took place and the ICU leaders had great hopes that the struggle in Britain would serve to free the colonial peoples. On 15 May 1926 a leading article in the *Worker's Herald* which called for support for the British workers, noted:

"The centre of modern capitalism is Great Britain, and if the workers there can bring about the defeat of capitalist Britain, the whole structure of modern capitalism will follow suit and will give way to the NEW ORDER OF SOCIETY."

It declared that "should the workers of Britain crush the bosses and the Conservative Government in the present struggle, the chances of the African workers are good indeed to throw off automatically the yoke of British Imperialism in Africa..."

In fact this euphoria, which also affected the world Communist and anti-colonial movement in such key sectors as China and India, involved both an under-estimation of the capacity for renewal of world capitalism and an over-estimation of the revolutionary potential of the Social-Democratic-led mass labour movements of the imperialist countries and, in the first place, of Great Britain. As we know, the great British strike was to be defeated, in part with the assistance of the labour leaders themselves. Thereafter, followed a most unhappy period in the history of the international working class movement, in which the opportunism of the Social-Democratic leaders was matched by the growth of sectarianism in the world Communist movement.

In the course of 1926 it became ever clearer that the loud revolutionary phrase-mongering of the ICU leaders, centering on the charismatic Kadalie himself, was being utilised as a veil behind which a retreat had begun. During 1926 Kadalie avoided the task of putting the ICU at the head of mass actions directed against the Hertzog policy, a task which was being pressed by the members of the Communist Party. The Kadalie leadership was coming, as the year advanced, increasingly under the influence of members of the Chamber of Mines-dominated Joint Council as well as anti-Communist elements in the British labour movement. The retreat was to find its most dramatic expression at the end of the year in the expulsion of Communist officials from the ICU.

The last phase of the national ICU was to be characterised by tribally-based splits, the most dramatic and significant of which was the Natal break-away, organised by the ICU provincial leader A.W.G. Champion, whose main interest in the ICU had been to use it as a base for business undertakings. That the ICU became, finally, a prey to such selfish petit-bourgeois elements pointed both to the petit-bourgeois social composition of its leadership as well as to its loose organisational structure which clearly facilitated such activities. However, these two factors do not constitute the basic reasons for the ICU's failure to survive. It was the fact that the conditions of the time were not favourable for the consolidation of a mass national liberatory movement that constituted the fundamental cause for the break-up of the ICU and its disappearance from the historical scene.

Notes

1. AC, 1st Quarter 1989.
2. The role of Garveyism has been discussed in a chapter in the doctoral thesis of Sylvia Neame, *An investigation of the national and international factors relevant to the expulsion of the Communists from the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (ICU)*, Leipzig, 1976.
3. See Sylvia Neame, "Chifira Village in Tongaland...", African History Seminar paper, Instit. of Commonwealth Studies, 1971.
4. See memoirs of Solomon Buirski (unpubl.).
5. *Cape Times*, 23 July 1921.
6. See *International(Int)*, 28 March 1924; *Worker's Herald(WH)*, 15 June, 20 July, 1925; 15 January 1926.
7. *Third Annual Conference Official Report of Proceedings*, pamphlet, Cape Town.
8. The (British) Protectorates referred to are, of course, Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland.
9. "General Secretary's Report for 1924" in *WH*, 15 May 1925.
10. Edward Roux, *S.P. Bunting*, Cape Town, 1944, p.70; *Int*, 20 June 1924. Kadalie has attempted to disguise the role of the Communists in his memoirs. See *My Life*, London, 1970, p.67.
11. Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, 1956, p. 144.
12. *WH*, 25 Sept. 1923.
13. *Int*, 11 Jan. 1924.
14. This is reflected *inter alia* in the ICU's 1925 constitution. See *1925 Revised Constitution*, pamphlet, Cape Town.
15. The relationship of the Communists to the ICU is considered in detail in Sylvia Neame, *op. cit.*, Leipzig, 1976.
16. See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Moscow, 1965, pp. 75-82.
17. The ANC's 1919 constitution is significant in this respect.
18. The ICU's leadership was, of course, not completely homogeneous in its political-ideological positions.
19. *WH*, 15 May 1925.
20. *Report of Proceedings*, p. 3-4.
21. *WH*, 15 May 1925.
22. See "National Secretary's Report for 1925" in *WH*, 28 April 1926; *My Life*, p. 78-9.
23. *My Life*, p. 67. For the sigh of relief in ICU circles at the change in the ANC's national leadership, see *WH*, 9 January 1925 and later, when news was received that Makgatho was retiring from politics, *WH*, 15 June 1926.
24. "The Political Situation and the Blacks" in *WH*, 15 Nov. 1925.

25. The following account is based on a report in *WH*, 15 January 1926 and Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*, London, 1970, pp. 112-3. Walshe incorrectly holds that the 'Bill of Rights' was originally drafted in 1925.

26. *WH*, 20 Feb. 1926.

27. *WH*, 28 April 1926.

28. *WH*, 20 Feb. 1926. Also see "National Secretary's Report for 1925", *ibid*.

29. *WH*, 15 Jan. 1926.

30. *ibid*.

31. *Cape Times*, 5 Jan. 1926.

32. *WH*, 20 Feb. 1926.

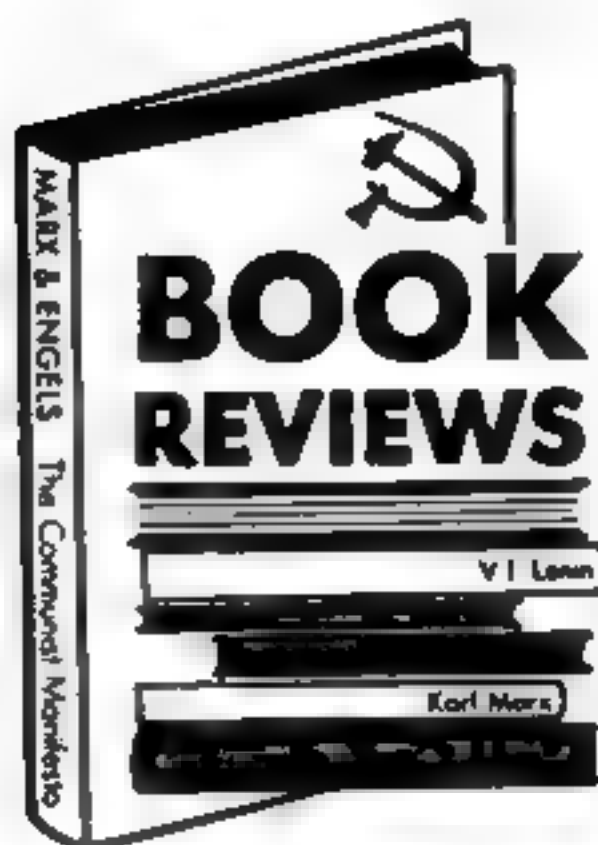
33. I do not exclude that only a section of the ICU leaders were involved in the project. At the same time, the emergence of an imperialist state on South African soil was, of course, connected with a new stage of world imperialism's development which was marked by the preparedness of the leading imperialist states to invest substantial sums of capital in the manufacturing industry of (some) former colonies and semi-colonies.

34. This new development was marked in particular by the Scarborough conference of the British TUC in 1925.

WHAT IS FREEDOM

The capitalists have always used the term 'freedom' to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death... 'Freedom of the press' is a deception while the best printing presses and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists.

*Lenin Theses on Bourgeois
Democracy, March 1917.*



THE CHARACTER AND PROSPECTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

SOUTH AFRICA BETWEEN REFORM AND REVOLUTION

by Alex Callinicos.

(Bookmarks, London 1988, pp. 196.)

POPULAR STRUGGLES IN SOUTH AFRICA

edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen

(Review of African Political Economy in association with James Currey, London 1988, pp 228)

The two books under review are, quantitatively speaking, only a tiny amount of the huge volume of literature on South Africa that has been published recently, yet the subject they are treating, qualitatively speaking, is the most important of all. Written in very persuasive language, Callinicos' book develops the themes he has already published in the past, namely, that the source of South Africa's political and economic problems is to be traced to the complex nature of its system which he defines as "racial capitalism".

As he argued in his book *Southern Africa After Soweto* (which he wrote with John Rodgers), he asserts once again that the development of industrial capitalism in South Africa gave rise to the system of racial domination, known since 1948 as apartheid. On this premise he then draws the conclusion that national liberation in South Africa would require a socialist revolution led by the black working class. He questions the wisdom of the immediate objectives of the liberation struggle as pronounced by the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement.

Again, as in the book he wrote in the 1980s titled *Southern Africa After Zimbabwe*, Callinicos outlines the structural contradictions of South African capitalism and concludes that the principle source of South Africa's economic problems is that it remains a peripheral formation in the world economy, importing the bulk of its capital goods and dependent for foreign exchange on Western investment and the products of its primary industries, above all gold. Providing detailed statistics on South Africa's poor economic performance in contrast to the industrialised countries, Callinicos suggests by implication that with a change in South Africa's economic growth pattern (which may not necessarily be brought about by revolutionary transformation), her economic problems would be over.

The problem with Callinicos' argument is its premise. While he correctly points to the link between apartheid and the capitalist system he fails to locate the problem in a comprehensive historical context. In fact, from the point of view of history, he puts the cart before the horse. Was it industrial capitalism which brought about national oppression (as Callinicos argues) or the other way around, colonial dispossession which provided the conditions for capital in South Africa to grow with dependence on cheap labour (as the SACP Programme argues)? Looked at not as a theoretical model but rather as a country in a concrete historical context, it becomes clear why South African revolutionaries organised in the ANC, SACP and MDM cannot divorce the development of South Africa from its colonial past. As the SACP Programme argues:

"Within South Africa, bourgeois domination and capitalist relations of production, which emerged within the context of colonialism, have been developed and maintained since 1910 through a specific variant of bourgeois rule... It is a variant of capitalist rule in which the essential features of colonial domination in the imperialist epoch are maintained and even intensified".

By failing to place South Africa's contradictions on a historical basis, Callinicos arrives at abstract conclusions about the nature of the South

African crisis. The whole purpose of his project seems to be to debunk the SACP and what he describes as its "Two-stage Theory of Revolution" which he characterises as the "populist tradition".

Even though he relies heavily on the definition of "crisis" provided by Gramsci (and subsequently quoted by many commentators on South Africa such as John Saul and Stephen Gelb), Callinicos fails to demonstrate the usefulness of this broad definition for the concrete study of the situation in South Africa.

These shortcomings in no way diminish the political and theoretical competence of the author. His problem is that he is travelling on a path to truth whose criterion is not practice but logic. The journey is thus sure to end in a land called Sophistry.

Popular Struggles in South Africa, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen, is a very interesting anthology of papers on the struggles in South Africa which occurred during the 1980s. The main focus of the book is to point out that whereas in the past people tended to regard the South African problem purely in terms of the black versus white struggle, in reality the relationships are more complex. Whites, for example, are to be found in the ranks of both the vigilantes and the democrats.

The articles by Rob Lambert and Eddie Webster, by Nkosinathi Gwala (nom de plume of a black lecturer at a black university in South Africa) as well as by the Transvaal Rural Action Committee, provide an illustration of the complexity of the South African struggle. While some black people (for reasons that are quite explicable) can be mobilised to fight those engaged in the liberation struggle, as is the case with Inkatha in Natal, a white democrat like Eddie Webster is prepared to lay down his life for the freedom of South Africa.

The major strength of this book is in those articles that chronicle the labour struggles. Lambert and Webster's article makes a very balanced analysis of the history of the labour movement in South Africa, and demonstrates how some of the current tendencies in ideological dispute emerged and why some have succeeded to mobilise the working class while others have remained fringes within academic seminar rooms. SACTU, which is openly acknowledged as the founder of the main political tendency in South African trade unionism today, is given a recognition which only those whose academic business is to search for mischief can ignore.

Flies in the Milk

The book also looks at the urban and rural struggles as well as struggles over the question of education. There are, however, as should be expected in such

a broad survey, a few flies in the milk, particularly when it comes to those sections of the book that attempt to discuss the theory of the South African revolution. John Saul provides a very controversial concluding chapter in which he characterises the ANC and SACP perspectives/theoretical traditions as populist, implying that they abandon a working class outlook in their formulation of strategies and policies. But as the editors of the book comment:

“the workerist/populist dichotomy contains an element of caricature and unreality”.

The ANC and the SACP (least of all the last named organisational) have never discounted the leading role of the working class in the South African revolution. Their sin, if one can be confessed before the academic priests, is that they refuse to advance a strategic framework that seeks to mobilise only workers in exclusion of the other oppressed classes, including the black petty-bourgeoisie.

As the title of this book suggests, it is the popular struggles (and not only the working class struggles) that are driving the apartheid state to collapse.

Sisa Majola

CLASS, COLOUR AND FICTION

CAPE TOWN COOLIE

by Reshard Gool, Heinemann African Writers Series 1990 Price £4.95.

The author of this book bore a famous Cape Town name, but was born in London in 1931 and, after spending most of his life outside South Africa, died in May 1989. He attended universities in England, Wales and Canada, was an academic, author and poet, taught at the University of Prince Edward Island where he lived with his artist wife, and in 1975 was elected a member of the Writers' Union of Canada.

Cape Town Coolie is a novel about the life and loves of lawyer Henry Naidoo, the 'coolie' of the title, whose involvement in politics leads

ultimately to his death at the hands of racist hooligans in a fracas outside the Cape Town City Hall. Naidoo's story is recounted by one Adrian van der Merwe, who describes himself as one of the "*Stellenbosch Van der Merwes* who... had more than a hand in the beginnings of the Great Trek, and later in the formation of the liberal *Afrikaner Bond*."

Explaining how he came to be mixed up with Naidoo, Adrian van der Merwe describes his liberal family background and says "so-called peoples of colour were frequent — sometimes too frequent — visitors to our household". One of the visitors was a Coloured schoolgirl Katherine Holmes with whom he had a schoolboy relationship and who later as a woman became involved with Henry Naidoo, whose diary after his death ended up in Adrian's hands.

Set against the backdrop of Table Mountain and all the sights and smells of District Six and Walmer Estate, here are all the elements of an exciting confrontation of class and colour, but somehow it does not materialise. The story line is unclear and episodic, characters wander in and out without any clear relationship either to one another or the plot. Though many episodes are trenchantly recounted, and much of the writing about Cape Town is very evocative, the novel does not flow. The complexity of human relationships in the South African context is hinted at but not properly explored.

Nevertheless, to anyone who knows Cape Town and its history at about the time the Nationalist Party came to power, there is a lot to muse over. Many of the personae are thinly disguised personalities of the day, even the *Torch* newspaper figures as the *Flame*. Those readers who were involved in the anti-apartheid campaigns of those days will be intrigued.

Considering that the author had close contact with South Africa, lived in Cape Town for a time and knew a great deal about its history, there are some surprising solecisms. The Afrikaans *meneer* is rendered as *mijnheer*, *veldskoene* as *veldtschoene*, *veld* as *veldt* and *maat* as *maart* (mate), *Afrikaner* as *Afrikaaner* — archaisms which Adrian van der Merwe should have corrected before he went to press.

Z.N.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS **ABOUT A WELL KNOWN** **LEADER**

Higher Than Hope: The Authorised Biography of Nelson Mandela

by Fatima Meer

(Hamish Hamilton, London, 1990, 428pp)

It is very tempting, on reading the media's general portrayal of Mandela, to conclude that the recent history of South African society is nothing else but the biography of this great man.

Fatima Meer's book on Nelson Mandela, however, lays most of the mythical aspects about his life to rest, as she succeeds in presenting a picture of an ordinary man who sacrificed his personal life, the warmth of a young family and a promising career as an attorney to become a living symbol of the liberation struggle of his people for freedom. Mandela initially could not take eagerly to the idea of a proposed biography of himself, since such an exercise, he reasoned, would amount to nothing less than an ego trip. But once convinced by many friends, including Fatima Meer, he accepted the validity of the argument that some biographies are a people's essential heritage.

Whereas, previously, the little that was known about Mandela the man came only from snippets of information which were revealed by his former colleagues in prison such as Mac Maharaj and Michael Dingake, Fatima Meer has put flesh on to those brief and yet informative skeletal accounts. She had the opportunity to interview her subject for a period of about eighteen hours in prison, and travelled hundreds of kilometres to Mandela's home village in the Transkei, where she conducted extensive interviews with several people from his clan.

The book traces Nelson Mandela from his birthplace at Mbhashe in the Umtata district in the second decade of this century — the son of Henry Gadla Mphakanyiswa and Nosekeni Fanny Mandela. The narrative is periodically punctuated by verbatim testimonies as well as by extracts from letters never

before made public. A brief history of the Thembu lineage situates Mandela within the context of an African culture as well as a tradition of resistance that dates several centuries back.

And although Ntombizodwa (four years older than Mandela), like most of Meer's interviewees in the Transkei, was ready to tell stories of a fairy-tale hero who "never gave trouble to the teachers or any of the girls in class" and "who attended school and church regularly and was as enthusiastic about Sunday school" as any of them, Nelson Mandela himself was quick to balance such one-dimensional accounts with a realistic portrayal of a round character who had positives and negatives. He told Fatima in a letter, for example, that before he left the Transkei for Johannesburg, he and his brother Justice Zwelivumile had stolen two oxen from his guardian, Chief Jongintaba, sold them to a local white trader and used the money to dash to the Golden City where his political life was to begin.

Through the pages of this book we are able to trace Mandela's development from Xhosa tribesman to South African nationalist. Coming into contact with several rising stars of his generation from all the four provinces of South Africa, including the legendary Anton Lembede, he acquired (in addition to the new perspectives he had already obtained at Fort Hare) a Pan-South African outlook. So that, when Gogo Mabuto of No. 46 Seventh Avenue, in Alexandra Township (where he first lodged on arrival in the Transvaal) suggested to him that he should only take out Xhosa girls, Mandela dismissed the idea because, according to him, he "had already developed beyond thinking along ethnic lines" (p. 26) and was determined not to follow her advice on this particular matter.

The book presents Mandela's own evaluation of some personalities at the centre of an emergent African urban culture in the mid-1940s Johannesburg, many of whom, like Oliver Tambo, William Nkomo, A.P. Mda, Lionel Majombozi, Congress Mbatha, David Bopape and Jordan Ngubane, were to be prominent in the affairs of the liberation struggle. While he admired Mda's clarity of thought and oratory, he was less complimentary about Lembede's tendency to obtuseness (which Nelson felt stamped Lembede more as a visionary than a politician). Perhaps more interesting is the account of Mandela's encounter with Gatsha Buthelezi, with whom, he says, he "formed a friendship which survives to this day" (Meer, p.37). This was way back before the violent conflict in Natal.

The rest of the book covers territory that is generally known, except that it is presented in a manner that gives it a certain measure of authenticity because of the authoritative sources available to the author. Winnie

Mandela was one source of this information, interspersed with her account of her own ordeals at the hands of the apartheid government.

Meer takes the Mandela story up to the period when his release from prison was still a matter of "strong rumour", and debates were going on in South Africa and abroad about how Mandela had changed or developed since he went to prison. In so doing, she provided useful information at a critical time. Yet there are a few indications that the book was written in haste, and it suffers from some errors of proof-reading as well as the absence of an index. The second edition could, however, correct these shortcomings as well as, possibly, fill up the gaps that were not covered by the eighteen hours of interview which were allowed by Mandela's prison authorities.

Sisa Majola





THE QUESTION OF **TROTSKYISM**

from C. van Gelderen
Cambridge

Dear Editor,

Helena is quite right (AC No 121). The question of Trotskyism should not simply be swept under the carpet. Recent developments in Eastern Europe, the near collapse of the international Communist movement surely demands that everything is now open to debate. Where and why did things go wrong? How did Stalin accrue such power and why was he allowed to misuse it in the way he did? The debates in the CPSU and the Communist International after the death of Lenin — debates which were, at first bureaucratically suppressed and was later to lead to the 'legal' murder of those who opposed the Stalinist line — could prove a key, and answer the question posed by Joe Slovo in his *Has Socialism Failed?* — "why (did) so many communists allow themselves to become so blinded for so long?" Trotsky's *Critique of the Draft Programme of the Communist International* which he attempted to present to the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928, is especially relevant.

Helena refers to the "history of damage done to the international working class struggles... by those we call Trotskyist activists". Not all the groups who call themselves Trotskyist or who are called Trotskyist are necessarily authentic followers of the man who created and led the Red Army and, along with Lenin, founded the Third (Communist) International. As for Dialego's assertion that "Trotsky throughout his life hindered rather than helped the struggle for socialism" (AC No 115) it would be interesting to compare Trotsky's contribution from the Russian Revolution onward, through the

struggle for the united front against the rising tide of Nazism in Germany, with Stalin's record which has led to the present situation when the very word communism has become anathema to the millions of workers in Eastern Europe, in the Soviet Union and in China.

In his interview with *South African Labour Bulletin* (May 1990), Slovo, when asked whether he would welcome, into the SACP, a range of people on the left, including "those holding Trotskyist views" replied: "We must move away from the old label approach, which dismissed people on the basis of a generalised characterisation of their politics..." Let us now see if the SACP has really embraced *glasnost*. Throw open the pages of *The African Communist* to a deep-going discussion of the issues involved.

APPRECIATION FROM NEAR AND FAR

In preparation for our return home, we recently sent a letter to some of our readers abroad advising them that unless we heard from them by return of post, they would be struck off our list of subscribers. In reply to this warning, and also to our recent appeal for funds, we received a very warming response, from which we have selected a few examples:

Dear Editor

How can you even contemplate it (cancellation)? *The African Communist* is my lifeline with sanity. Please keep sending.

Long live AC!

R. McLaren
Harare

Dear Editor,

I wish to send an on-the-spot reply to your note. I wish to appeal that you do well by not stopping to send me subsequent issues of the journal. The district in which I live is one of the areas in Ghana and for that matter Africa that are now getting exposed to events in Southern Africa. There is always a long queue of readers for any of the issues I have received from your desk. The journal has attracted curiosity from many people desirous of getting in touch with the situation in Southern Africa.

I therefore wish to reiterate that there is real need for continuing to send me subsequent issues of the journal.

A.S.,
Ghana

Dear Editor,

We have just received No. 122 of your journal: *The African Communist*, thank you! We have received it for many years, and we certainly still want it.

Anna Rasmussen,
for Tidsskriftscentret, Copenhagen

Dear Editor,

We would like to acknowledge having received No. 122. We are finding the publication of great use for our current studies on the developments in South Africa at present. Please keep up the good work.

Fortune Ncube,
Southern African Research
and Documentation Centre,
Harare

Dear Editor,

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of *The African Communist*. We read this journal with a lot of interest and wish to continue to receive it.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on such an interesting publication and wish you every success in your struggle for a just and progressive society in South Africa.

Elisio Macamo,
Attache, Embassy of the People's
Republic of Mozambique, London

Dear Editor,

Please don't stop sending your journal. It is essential.

J. Khumalo,
Harare

Dear Editor,

May I make it plain to stop sending the AC will be a blow not only to me but to many others in this part of the country as we have had to form a study group on Marxism-Leninism and the AC is playing an important role in guidelines.

Hoping you will decide to continue to send copies to me and other friends I introduced.

T.D.M.,
Bulawayo

Dear Editor,

Having read your appeal in the latest *African Communist* I am sending a £10 donation. As a CPB and AAM member I find *African Communist* to be excellent to read, providing me with an insight into countries in Africa.

Liz Hobbs,
Birmingham

Dear Editor,

I enclose a small donation towards the journal, which remains one of the few beacons to which communists in all countries can look for leadership in these times of reactionary ascendancy.

J.A. Hughes,
Cornforth, Lancashire

Dear Editor,

I am pleased to send our donation of £5, on behalf of my wife Barbara and myself. We are sorry to learn of the extent of the loss of support from the SED of the GDR. However we are optimistic that *The African Communist*, along with the SACP, will flourish when you are able to remove to home and enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority. We hope to be there with you.

Amandla!

Stan Smith,
Lowestoft

Dear Editor,

Pleased to send donation (£20) as requested. What is to be said under the

circumstances? I believe in the Power of the People. Victory will be yours. The South African Communist Party is the people's party. Victory will be ours. Thanks for your journal.

L. Faulkner,
Staines

Dear Editor,

I have received with great pleasure *The African Communist* which is one of the good journals I've been reading regularly. It not only enables me to follow closely the developments in your country, but also gives me a good opportunity to know your Party's elaboration on some important issues concerning the Marxist-Leninist basic theories.

In the last one or two years extraordinary events have taken place and are still occurring either in the world or in South Africa itself. Socialism is undergoing a severe period of time. As Joe Slovo points out in his paper *Has Socialism Failed?* even some communists are "losing faith in the Socialist objective" and "Marxist theory under fire". I can't agree more with him when he writes, "the fault lies with us, not with Socialism".

I have enjoyed reading the writings from your journal and found myself enlightened a lot. Therefore I have introduced some of the articles to Chinese readers.

W.Z.,
Beijing, China

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for *The African Communist* which we have been receiving two copies of each issue regularly and freely. The journal is among the other serials that are heavily read here, in our library.

We are, therefore, longing for your further publications of the journal.

Roberto Cigana,
Member of the Central Committee of the
Workers' Party of Ethiopia and Rector
of the Yekatit 66 Institute of
Political Education

Dear Editor,

It is difficult to give adequate expression to the feelings of a German Communist when reading your *African Communist* no. 122: inside the explanation why the journal can no longer be printed in the GDR, and on the title page Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo side by side negotiating on behalf of the ANC with the representatives of the apartheid regime.

My very best wishes are with your struggle. I have always found your journal extremely valuable, and even more so in times when there is so much confusion about the nature of imperialism.

Lothar Letsche,
Tuebingen, West Germany

Dear Editor,

We have been receiving *The African Communist* for some years and find it very useful. We would like to remain on your mailing list.

Iain Christie,
Head of Radio Mozambique's
External Service, Maputo

Dear Editor,

For the past thirteen years in exile, I found a political home in your publication, *The African Communist*. Indeed it is a journal that should continue to be published in South Africa for the benefit of the masses who have been deprived of valuable facts and information.

Bangile Lungile,
Maseru

Dear Editor,

Please continue to send *The African Communist* to me. In the heart of the USA — where the corn grows 10 and 12 feet high, where the wheatfields are like an ocean with no end — we live in poverty. We cannot work long enough or hard enough to satisfy our own capitalists. Exploitation is the way of things. The only answer is Communism, first beginning with socialism.

Sid Rasmussen — CPUSA,
Iowa, USA

LISTEN TO
RADIO FREEDOM
Voice of the African
National Congress and
Umkhonto We Sizwe,
The People's Army

Radio Lusaka

Shortwave 31mb, 9505 KHz

7.00 p.m. Daily
10.15-10.45 p.m. Wednesday
9.30-10.00 p.m. Thursday
10.15-10.45 p.m. Friday

Shortwave 25mb, 11880 KHz

8.00-8.45 a.m. Sunday

Radio Luanda

Shortwave 31mb, 9535 KHz
and 25mb

7.30 p.m. Monday-Saturday
8.30 p.m. Sunday

Radio Madagascar

Shortwave 49mb, 6135 KHz

7.00-9.00 p.m. Monday-Saturday
7.00-8.00 Sunday

Radio Ethiopia

Shortwave 31mb, 9595 KHz

9.30-10.00 p.m. Daily

Radio Tanzania

Shortwave 31mb, 9750 KHz

8.15 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
6.15 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

The above are South African times

**AVAILABLE FROM
INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS**

P.O. BOX 902, LONDON N19 3YY. Phone (071) 263 8417

Has Socialism Failed? by Joe Slovo — the current crisis in the international communist movement. (28 page pamphlet). Price £1.50/\$3.

The Path to Power — the full text of the new Programme of the South African Communist Party adopted at its 7th Congress, plus the constitution of the SACP, here published for the first time. (Pamphlet 70 pages.) Price £2/\$4 plus postage.

Index to *The African Communist* 1959-1988.

(Hard-cover book 120 pages.) Price £5/\$10 plus postage.

The World Greeted the South African Communist Party: Messages to the 7th Congress. (Pamphlet 48 pages.) Price £1/\$2 plus postage.

The S.A. Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution by Joe Slovo (38-page pamphlet). Price £1/\$2 plus postage.

50 Fighting Years by A Lerumo (Michael Harmel). Revised edition. A history of the S.A. Communist Party after 50 years. (190 pages). Price £5/\$10 plus postage.

Moses Kotane — South African Revolutionary (revised edition) by Brian Bunting (290 pages). Price £5/\$10 plus postage.

South African Communists Speak 1915-1980.

A book of documents from the history of the South African Communist Party. (474 pages). Price £10/\$20 plus postage.

The Road to South African Freedom. Programme of the SACP adopted inside South Africa in 1962 (pamphlet 60 pages). Price 50p/\$1 plus postage.

Philosophy and Class Struggle (revised edition) by Dialego. The basic principles of Marxism seen in the context of the South African liberation struggle. (Pamphlet 44 pages). Price £1/\$2 plus postage.

A Distant Clap of Thunder.

Fortieth anniversary of the 1946 Mine Strike. A salute by the S.A. Communist Party to South Africa's black mine workers, by Toussaint (pamphlet 30 pages). Price £1/\$2 plus postage.

Seventy Years of Workers' Power.

A Tribute by the SA Communist Party to the Russian Revolution by Toussaint (pamphlet 28 pages). Price £1/\$2 plus postage.

**Send your order to Inkululeko Publications at the above address,
enclosing cheque/Post office giro/International postal order.
Our South African readers should contact SACP, PO Box 2424,
Johannesburg 2000 for information regarding the above.**